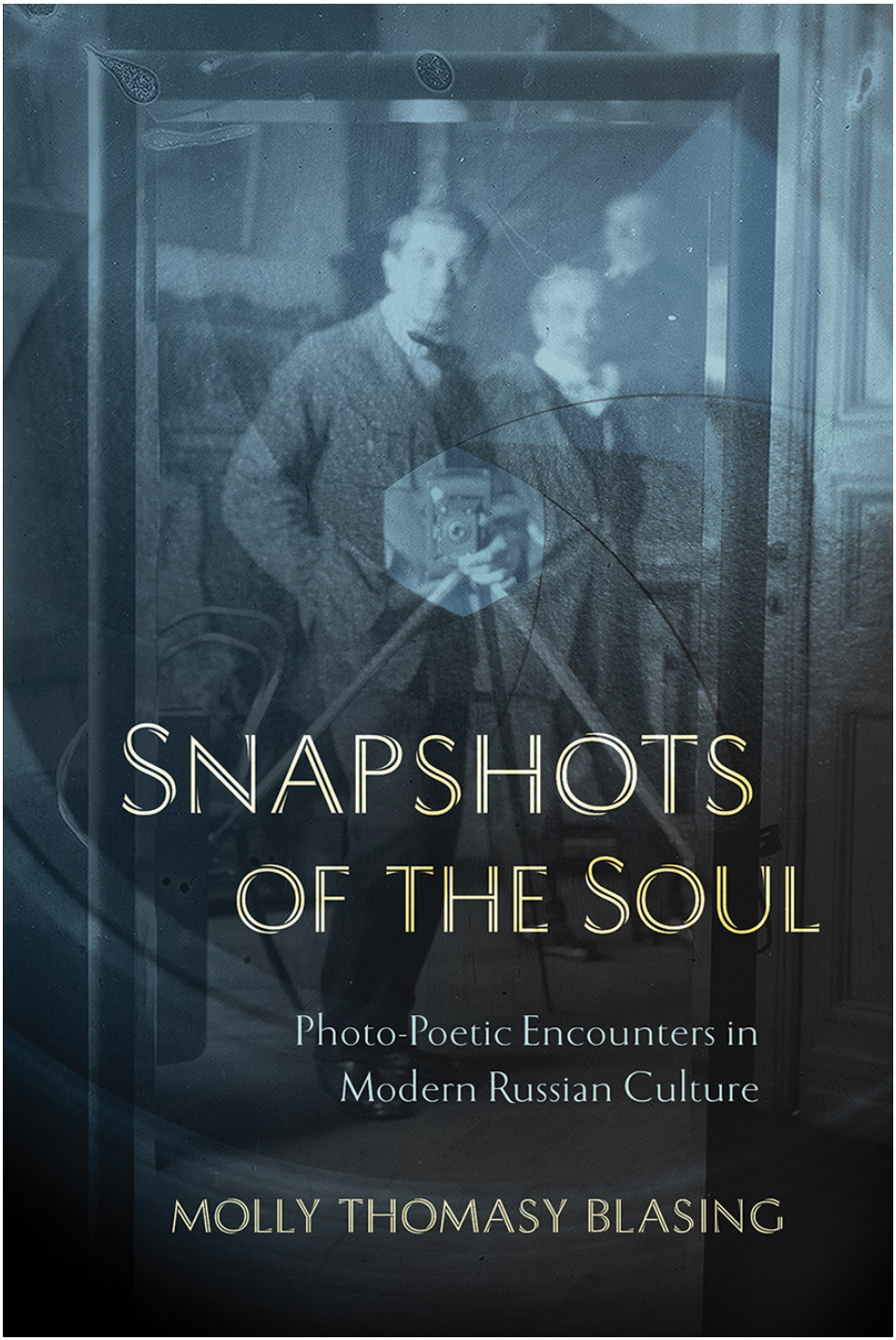

SNAPSHOTS
OF THE SOUL
Photo-Poetic Encounters in
Modern Russian Culture
MOLLY THOMASY BLASING

SNAPSHOTS OF THE SOUL

PHOTO-POETIC ENCOUNTERS IN MODERN RUSSIAN CULTURE

MOLLY THOMASY BLASING

CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS
Ithaca and London

For Keith, Isaac, and Leo

and in memory of Robert M. Ferrante, whose music lessons provided my first encounters with Russian culture

Contents

List of Illustrations

Acknowledgments

Permissions Notes

Note on Transliteration and Translation

Prologue: A Century of Photo-Poetic Encounters

Introduction. Poetry and Photography: Encounters, Connections, and Change

1. Illuminating Consciousness: Pasternak's Poetics of Photography

2. Through the Lens of Loss: Tsvetaeva's Elegiac Photo-Poetics

3. Framing Memory: Brodsky and Photographic Time

4. Poetic Mothers in the Photo Frame: Akhmadulina's Lyric Dialogue with Silver Age Snapshots

5. Darkroom of Dreams: Poetry, Photography, and the Optical Unconscious

Coda. Digital Denied: Poetry and Photography after 1999

Notes

Cover
Title
Dedication
Contents
List of Illustrations
Acknowledgments
Permissions Notes
Note on Transliteration and Translation
Prologue: A Century of Photo-Poetic Encounters
Introduction. Poetry and Photography: Encounters, Connections, and Change
1. Illuminating Consciousness: Pasternak's Poetics of Photography
2. Through the Lens of Loss: Tsvetaeva's Elegiac Photo-Poetics
3. Framing Memory: Brodsky and Photographic Time
4. Poetic Mothers in the Photo Frame: Akhmadulina's Lyric Dialogue with Silver Age Snapshots
5. Darkroom of Dreams: Poetry, Photography, and the Optical Unconscious
Coda. Digital Denied: Poetry and Photography after 1999
Notes
Index
Copyright

Guide

Cover
Title
Dedication
Contents
List of Illustrations
Acknowledgments
Permissions Notes
Note on Transliteration and Translation
Prologue: A Century of Photo-Poetic Encounters
Start of Content
Coda. Digital Denied: Poetry and Photography after 1999
Notes

Index
Copyright

i
ii
iii
v
vi
vii
viii
ix
x
xi
xii
xiii
xiv
xv
xvi
xvii
xviii
xix
xx
xxi
xxii
xxiii
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15

296
297
298
299
300
301
302
iv

Illustrations

1.1. Leonid and Aleksandr Pasternak, Exhibition of Union of Russian Artists, Moscow, 1911
1.2. Boris Pasternak, 1950
1.3. Boris Pasternak, 1950
1.4. Boris, Evgeniia and Evgenii Pasternak, Moscow, 1924
1.5. Aleksandr and Boris Pasternak, Moscow, 1898
1.6. The horse in motion, Palo Alto track, 1878
1.7. Leonid Pasternak with his children, Raiki Mansion, 1907
1.8. Photograph from Bear Lakes, 1907
1.9. Photograph from Bear Lakes, 1907
1.10. Leonid Pasternak and Boris Zbarskii, Moscow, 1917
1.11. Boris Pasternak at the piano, Vsevolodo-Vil′va, 1916
1.12. Boris Pasternak, Vsevolodo-Vil′va, 1916
1.13. Aleksandr and Leonid Pasternak self-portrait in a mirror, Moscow, c.1915–21
1.14. Elena A.Vinograd, 1917
1.15. Elena A. Vinograd, 1917
2.1. Anastasiia Tsvetaeva, Sergei Efron, Marina Tsvetaeva, with a portrait of M.L.(Bernatskaia) Mein, Moscow, 1911
2.2. Photograph of Marina Tsvetaeva taken at Petr Shumov's studio, Paris, 1926
2.3. Rainer Maria Rilke, Muzot, Switzerland, 1926
2.4. "Le Potager" (The Vegetable Patch), Rainer Maria Rilke, Muzot, Switzerland, 1926
2.5. The Prague Knight statue, 2013
2.6. Front page of the January 12, 1934 edition of *Poslednie novosti*, announcing A. Belyi's death
2.7. Close-up of the photograph of Andrei Belyi, *Poslednie novosti*, January 12, 1934, 1
2.8. Photograph of Andrei Belyi, *Poslednie novosti*, January 12, 1934, 2

2.9. Nikolai Gronskii's writing desk in his Paris apartment, December 1934
2.10. "Cabinet de travail (Muzot)," Rainer Maria Rilke's writing desk, Muzot
2.11. Icon above Nikolai Gronskii's bed in his Paris apartment, 1934
2.12. Cabinet in Nikolai Gronskii's apartment, Paris, 1934
2.13. View of an open cabinet in Nikolai Gronskii's apartment, Paris, 1934
2.14. Fireplace mantel with sculpted busts of Nikolai Gronskii, Paris, 1934
2.15. Double-exposed image (horizontal) of desk, cabinet, and desk lamp in Nikolai Gronskii's apartment, Paris, 1934
2.16. Ninety-degree rotated view of the double-exposed image from Nikolai Gronskii's apartment, Paris, 1934
2.17. Enhanced figure (Marina Tsvetaeva) sitting at Gronskii's desk, Paris, 1934
2.18. Marina Tsvetaeva's shadow on the gravestone at the Montparnasse Cemetery, 1938
2.19. Marina Tsvetaeva's autograph on the reverse of the photograph, Montparnasse Cemetery, 1938
3.1. Joseph Brodsky's self-portrait with camera in Norenskaia exile, c.1964
3.2. Joseph Brodsky at a photo atelier in Norenskaia, c.1964
3.3. Joseph Brodsky in front of the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii cathedral, Leningrad, 1956
3.4. Joseph Brodsky's parents in front of the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii cathedral, Leningrad, 1980s
3.5. Joseph Brodsky at an airport in Yakutsk, 1959
3.6. Joseph Brodsky's photograph taken at Pulkovo airport, 1972
3.7. "W.H.Auden" by Rollie McKenna, 1952
3.8. Draft notebook version of lines 1–12 of Part V of Brodsky's *Roman Elegies*
3.9. Draft notebook variants of lines 13–20 of Part V of Brodsky's *Roman Elegies*
3.10. Draft notebook variants of lines 13–20 of Part V of Brodsky's *Roman Elegies*
4.1. Bella Akhmadulina at her writing desk
4.2. Authors of the *Metropol'* with the almanac, Moscow, 1979
4.3. Anna Akhmatova, Ospedaletti, Italy, 1912
4.4. Sergei Efron and Marina Tsvetaeva in a group photograph at

Voloshin's dacha, Koktebel, 1913
4.5. Georgii Efron and Marina Tsvetaeva, Summer, 1935
4.6. M. Tsvetaeva, L. Lebedinskaia, A. Kruchenykh, and G. Efron, Kuskovo, 1941
4.7. Marina Tsvetaeva's autograph on the reverse, "To dear Alexei Eliseevich Kruchenykh," 1941
5.1. Portrait of Arkadii Dragomoshchenko by Ostap Dragomoshchenko, 1982
5.2. "Glass," photograph by Arkadii Dragomoshchenko
5.3. "The Pin" (cover image for *Tautology*), photograph by Arkadii Dragomoshchenko
5.4. "Lezvie cherno-belogo dozhdia" (Blade of a Black-and-White Rain), 2005, photograph by Andrei Sen-Sen′kov
5.5. "Dvukhseriinyi konets fil′ma" (A Two-Part End of a Film), 2000, photograph by Andrei Sen-Sen′kov
5.6. Andrei Sen-Sen′kov with an ultrasound machine, 2013
5.7. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*
5.8. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*
5.9. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*
5.10. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*

Acknowledgments

This book began over a decade ago in the Slavic Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I extend deep gratitude to David Bethea, who has been generous and unwavering in his support of this endeavor from those early days. I also thank Irina Shevelenko, Andrew Reynolds, Karen Evans-Romaine, and Francine Hirsch for their detailed feedback at that critical juncture. I am indebted to my dear friend and colleague, Elena Mikhailovna Kallo, who has guided my research in Russia since 2009. I also thank the archivists, librarians, and curators at the Beineke Library at Yale University, the Stanford University Libraries and Archives, the Hoover Institution at Stanford, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), the Tsvetaeva House Museum, and the Pasternak family for allowing me access to the archival materials they keep. Research for this project was supported by a Fulbright Program grant sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State and administered by the Institute of International Education; a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend; the University of Kentucky Office of the Vice President for Research; and the University of Kentucky College of Arts and Sciences. I am grateful to Petr Pasternak, Boris Messerer, Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, Marina Tarkovskaia, Kirill Kozyrev, Zinaida Dragomoshchenko, Polina Barskova, Kirill Medvedev, and Ann Kjellberg and the Joseph Brodsky Estate for granting permission to publish the poems and photographs that enrich this book. I extend my thanks to Mahinder Kingra, editor in chief at Cornell University Press, for his attentiveness, guidance, and enthusiastic support of the project, and to Irina Burns for the expert copy editing. I am also grateful to the press's anonymous reviewers, whose generous and insightful evaluations were instrumental in bringing the work to completion.

I am fortunate to have the support of many wonderful colleagues at the University of Kentucky and beyond. I am indebted to generous

individuals who read the full manuscript or individual chapters of the book at various stages; for their rich, detailed feedback I am grateful to Cynthia Ruder, Leon Sachs, Kevin McGowan, Molly Peeney, Gordon Hogg, and Karen Rignall. To my writing group peers at UK—Michelle Sizemore, DaMaris Hill, Jacqueline Couti, Brenna Byrd, Emily Shortslef, Daniel Frese, Tiffany Barnes, Emily Beaulieu Bacchus, Jillienne Haglund, Liang Luo, Anna Bosch, Mel Stein, Echo Ke, Nisrine Slitine El Mghari, Jonghee Lee Caldararo—the accountability and camaraderie has meant the world to me. I am especially fortunate to work alongside other marvelous Russian Studies colleagues Jeanmarie Rouhier-Willoughby, Karen Petrone, Anna Voskresensky, and Edward Lee and everyone in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Cultures. Thanks to Julie Human, Jeff Peters, and Peter Kalliney for their helpful advice and encouragement. I am grateful every day for the administrative support of Liliana Drucker and Katie Holzhause.

For their ongoing guidance, inspiration, and generous feedback over many years I wish to acknowledge Sibelan Forrester, Katherine M. H. Reischl, Angelina Lucento, Jenifer Presto, Catherine Ciepiela, Olga Hasty, John MacKay, Erika Wolf, Alexandra Smith, Alyssa Gillespie, Stephanie Sandler, Margarita Nafpaktitis, Valentina Polukhina, Elaine Feinstein, Sonia Ketchian, Tatiana Aleshka, Martha Kelly, Laura Little, Kathleen Scollins, Shannon Spasova, Viktoria Kononova, Lisa Woodson, Stephanie Richards, Melissa Miller, Grigori Utgof, S. A. Karpukhin, and Erik McDonald.

For their patience and encouragement, I am grateful to my parents, Susan and Steven Thomasy, to my in-laws, T. J. and Carolyn Blasing, and to my sister Rachel for her smart words of advice on finding joy in the struggle to write. My deepest thanks go to my partner, Keith Blasing, for many years of intellectual, emotional, and practical support; and to my sons, Isaac and Leo, for their boundless energy and love.

Permissions Notes

The following institutions and individuals gave permission to use the copyrighted poetic texts. Public domain texts and briefly cited texts are not listed.

"Elegiia na rentgenovskii snimok moego cherepa" by Elena Shvarts, courtesy of Kirill Kozyrev.

"Ob″em prevrashchaetsia v ploskost′. Eto i est′ smert′" by Polina Barskova, courtesy of the author.

"Fotografiia" by Arsenii Tarkovsky, courtesy of Marina Tarkovskaya.

"Khmel′," Sosny," "Groza, momental′naia navek," "V lesu," "Zerkalo," "Toska, beshenaia, beshenaia," "Zamestitel′nitsa," "Studenty" (*Deviat′sot piatyi god*), *Spektorskii*, *Doktor Zhivago*, and "Edinstvennye dni" by Boris Pasternak, courtesy of the Pasternak Family Estate.

Russian language poems, interview excerpts, and archival materials by Joseph Brodsky used by permission of The Wylie Agency LLC. Translations "We lived in a city the colour of frozen vodka," "Lithuanian Nocturne," "Roman Elegies," "Brise Marine," "A Polar Explorer" by Joseph Brodsky (*Collected Poems in English*, 2002), and "Christmas Ballad" (*Nativity Poems*, 2002), trans. Glynn Maxwell are reprinted here by kind permission of Carcanet Press Limited, Manchester, UK and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Macmillan Publishers, New York, USA. Excerpts from *Less Than One*, *On Grief and Reason*, and *Watermark* used with permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Macmillan Publishers, New York, USA, and Hamish Hamilton, an imprint of Penguin Books Ltd., London, UK.

"Noch′ pered vystupleniem," "Snimok," and "Klianus′" by Bella Akhmadulina used with permission of Boris Messerer.

"Sni, kotorye vidiat fotografov," "Ksenii," by Arkadii Dragomoshchenko used with permission of Zinaida Dragomoshchenko.
"Slomannye fotografii Dzhona Glessi," "Fotobumaga. Strana izgotovleniia—EU," "Na smert' liubogo cheloveka . . ." by Andrei Sen-Sen'kov used with the author's permission.
"menia vsegda udivliaet . . ." by Kirill Medvedev used with the author's permission.

Note on Transliteration and Translation

All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated in the endnotes. I have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration, with occasional modifications for surnames that are more recognizable in other forms (Brodsky for Brodskii, for example).

Prologue: A Century of Photo-Poetic Encounters

In February 2010 I attended a poetry reading in Moscow by the contemporary Russian writer Sergei Gandlevsky. In the discussion afterward, moderated by the late writer and translator Asar Eppel′, an audience member asked Gandlevsky to speak about his creative process: how he comes up with ideas for poems and how he goes about writing them. I was struck by how Gandlevsky characterized both the moment of poetic inspiration and his broader writing practice in terms of photographic processes. In his telling, the inspiration for a poem transpires with the suddenness of a photo-camera's flashbulb, transforming an initial image or combination of words into something that fixes in his mind and endures in his fragile memory.[1]

> I go for walks with my dog or ride on the electric train. And I just stumble upon a word combination . . . Oh! And I remember it. And a year or two later something might stick to it. . . . I mean, clearly something must happen in my brain. I don't exactly have a brilliant memory, you know? . . . But I remember clearly everything that was around me in that moment of "Oh!": where it was, the weather . . . apparently there's a kind of surge that happens in your brain. *It's like everything gets recorded by a magnesium flashbulb.*[2]

Later in his remarks, while describing the process by which he subsequently fills out the text of a poem around this initial snapshot of an idea, Gandlevsky likened the composition process to a metaphorical photograph coming into view, as if in a darkroom developing solution. Describing the emergence of a poem stanza by stanza he said, "I might walk for a long time and moan and groan . . . And then something just . . .

aha! And another stanza appears, and then another. And then, basically, it's done. That's it. I'm the author and this is my poem. *It's as if the poem emerges from the photographic fixing solution* , you know?"[3] For Gandlevsky, inspiration comes as a sudden photo-flash illumination of an idea that is fixed in a form that will not be forgotten. Conversely, the struggle to flesh out the poem's ideas and language is closer to the photographic developing process, wherein the body of the text gradually reveals itself until it is a fully formed, stable entity. It is perhaps not by accident that Gandlevsky elsewhere in this postreading discussion uses the word *oblik* (appearance)—with its roots in *lik* (face, countenance) and its connection to portraiture or icon painting—to refer to the idea of the wholly completed poetic text. This *oblik* of a fully realized poem is like the photographic snapshot, fixed such that it will not fundamentally be altered ("it's basically all there, you can't scare it off at this point" [ono uzhe vse, ego uzhe ne spugnesh′]).[4]

Gandlevsky, elsewhere in his works, characterizes his genesis as a poet in terms of still and moving images. A poem titled "First Snow, as if Filmed in Slow Motion" (Pervyi sneg, kak v zamedlennoi s″emke) from his 2006 cycle *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (Portret khudozhnika v otrochestrve) details the earliest moments of his self-conceptualization as a writer.[5] The poem's author-speaker describes the way he, as a young person, first began to see the world in poetic terms, concluding with the lines "He said to himself: Hey, why not / Be a writer? That's what he became" (On skazal sebe: 'Chto kak tebe / Stat′ pisatelem?' Vot on i stal im). The poem uses photographic, optical, and cinematic imagery to illuminate these formative moments of his call to poetry.[6]

Первый снег, как в замедленной съёмке,
На Сокольники падал, пока,
Сквозь очки озирая потёмки,
Возвращался юннат из кружка.
. . .
Двор сиял, как промытое фото.
Веренице халуп и больниц
Сообщилось серьёзное что-то—
Белый верх, так сказать, чёрный низ.

The first snow, as if filmed in slow motion
At Sokolniki fell to the ground
Through his glasses the darkness reflected

A young naturalist returning from Scouts.
. . .
The yard shone like a just-printed photo.
A serious something conveyed
To the row of small huts and the hospitals—
White on top, so to speak, black below.[7]

For Gandlevsky, the language of photography and its aesthetic and temporal qualities become a metaphor to explain both his origins as a poet and his writerly practice.

In 1913, nearly a century before Gandlevsky's remarks, an experimental writer Tikhon Churilin (1885–1946) composed a two-part poem he titled "In Photozincography" (V fototsinkografii), which also frames his self-conception as a poet in terms of photo-chemical metaphors.[8] Churilin suffered from schizophrenia (*mania presledovaniia*) and underwent psychiatric treatments throughout his adult life.[9] His first book of poems, *Spring after Death* (Vesna posle smerti), was published in 1915 and included several lithograph illustrations by Natalia Goncharova. The book represents a new awakening and renewed sense of possibility after the dark days of mental illness, hunger strikes, and forced feedings he underwent in a psychiatric hospital during late 1909–12, a period of his life he referred to as his "two years of spiritual death."[10] Nikolai Gumilev characterized the book as built around a "strict logic of madness and truly delirious imagery" and described Churilin's primary focus as the experience of a person "closely approaching madness, sometimes even fully mad."[11] The poet was lauded as "brilliant" by his close friend and fellow poet Marina Tsvetaeva.[12]

In part 1 of the poem "In Photozincography," subtitled "Photo from a Portrait" (S″emka s portreta), the poet uses photozincography—the process of transferring a photographic negative onto a light-sensitive zinc plate for reproduction or enlargement—as an allegory of the poet-speaker's self-conception as a figure of power.

Съемка с портрета
Светлый свет
Ярко брызнул на бледный
Мой портрет.
Вот теперь я, поэт,
—Победный![13]
. . .

A radiant light
Flashed brightly on my
Pale portrait.
Now there I am, a poet,
—Victorious!
. . .

The lyric speaker, subsequently witnessing the triumphant transfer of his image, sees himself momentarily as a tsar ("I am like a tsar at a feast") (Ia kak tsar′ na piru). But when a blaze of sun-glazed color and a menacing knock at the window invade his psyche, his image undergoes a sudden metaphorical transfer to the next stage of chemical fixing, and the triumphant tsarpretender is snuffed out ("Click—the coffer slams shut. / The tsar is snuffed.") (Khlop—zakhlopnuli lar′ / —Potukh tsar′).[14]

The second part of the diptych, "The Developing Process" (Proiavlenie), figures the lyric speaker—in conversation with his double—confronting his own image as it emerges from a developing solution of poison within the closed-off, deathly space of the darkroom of his damaged mind.

Проявление
Маленькая мертвая каморка
Темная, как ад. Смотрим оба зорко:
В кюветке—яд, туда наш взгляд.
Вот . . .
На черном радостном фоне—белый урод.
Это я . . .
—Жалит змея меня.
Это ты.
—Кряхтят в норе кроты.
Как странно . . . как странно ново.
—Слово:
Ну, всё,—готово.
Ах—угорели? Во тьме—нездорово.[15]

The small, deathly closet room is
Dark, like hell.
We both look fixedly:
Our gaze directed at the poison in the developing tray
There . . .

On the gleeful black background—a white freak.
That's me . . .
"The snake is biting me."
That's you.
"The moles are grunting in their burrow."
How strange . . . how strangely new.
"The word":
Well, that's it. Ready.
Oh! All poisoned by the fumes? It's unhealthy in the dark.

The uncanny use of photo-chemical processes as a metaphor for self-actualization and mental deterioration in Churilin and the representation of poetic inspiration in photographic terms by Gandlevsky are just two examples illustrating the range of creative possibilities that emerge from poetic encounters with the photographic. This book explores how twentieth-century Russian poets, who were actively writing between Churilin and Gandlevsky, have come to relate aspects of the poetic process to the aesthetics and mechanics of photographic processes. Photography operates as both inspiration and opponent for modernist poets for whom language is the main material for expression within a world increasingly saturated with images. Much more than simply a study of ekphrasis—of poems that describe photographs—this book takes as its central question something broader, opening scholarship to the investigation of deeper ontological connections between the lyric and the snapshot.

This book asks what compels a poet to turn to a photograph, whether as the subject of a work, as material for metaphor, or as the structural framework for a poem. *Snapshots of the Soul* represents part of a growing body of scholarship that investigates the way that photography operates as the material or method for poetic writing in the twentieth century. Drawing on theories of lyric and elegy, the social history of technology, and little-known materials from the Russian literary archives, this book considers how encounters with photographs and photography enter the space of poetic writing for a range of Russian-language poets, in émigré contexts as well as in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Through analysis of photography's role in the creative worlds of Boris Pasternak (1890–1960), Marina Tsvetaeva (1892–1941), Joseph Brodsky (1940–96), and Bella Akhmadulina (1937–2010), and in a selection of works by other modern and contemporary poets, this book asks how and why poets are drawn to the language, representational power, and metaphorical possibilities that photography offers. We will see how photography's status as a visual

threat to the verbal arts compels these writers to harness the poetic word to confront, engage, and sometimes transcend the compelling force of photographic verisimilitude.

Introduction

Poetry and Photography: Encounters, Connections, and Change

This book's explicit focus on poetry draws attention to a form of cultural production that speaks to long-standing anxieties about the threat visual culture poses to verbal culture.[1] From Plato and Aristotle's debates about the limits of the mimetic arts for human expression, to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's challenge to *ut pictura poesis* ("as is painting, so is poetry"), C. S. Pierce's foundational work in semiotics and linguistic signs, and W. J. T. Mitchell and James Heffernan's contributions to modern theories of ekphrasis, the struggle to understand the text-image relationship has a long and enduring history.[2] Writers, artists, and thinkers have debated for centuries whether experiences—temporal, spatial, and emotional—are better conveyed in text or in image. The introduction of photography to world culture beginning in 1839 had a transformative effect on writing and communication across the globe; with the advent of photography there was suddenly a new, if long-anticipated, tool for creating tangible and lasting images to preserve moments of experience. Photography brought about the ability to see an enhanced visual representation of people, places, and moments in time that were previously unavailable for capture or wide distribution.

Photography is powerful in the way it extends natural human vision and alters modes of remembering and storytelling. Photographs show us things that exist but may be otherwise imperceptible to the unmediated human eye. Photographic images offer humans a particularly compelling view of what we look like, as individuals and communities, and how we change over time. Because of photography's immediacy and its strange way of commanding our attention, the photographic portrait compels us

to see, know, and measure ourselves in new ways. Reflected in the camera obscura and fixed in perfect detail using chemically sensitive metal or paper, photographs transform the entire process and project of mimesis because their very existence arises from direct encounters with "the real."

Photography and Poetry in Russian Literary Culture

For Russian writers from the mid-nineteenth century on, photography has been a source of fascination and enormous creative appeal.[3] But the medium also created deep skepticism and mistrust among writers who, like their European counterparts, viewed it as a palpable threat to literary culture. With the emergence of photography in the first half of the nineteenth century, the concern among the literary establishment of the time was that writing—and literary Realism and Naturalism in particular—would be eclipsed or made obsolete by a mechanism for producing incredibly precise images of the world. Such concerns are reflected in descriptions of menacing, distorted photographs found in the pages of novels and stories by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Lev Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev, and Anton Chekhov; yet photographic motifs are almost absent from nineteenth-century poetic writing in Russian.[4] A few exceptions include Nikolai Nekrasov's humorous send-up of the daguerreotype in his *A Provincial Clerk in Petersburg* and Afanasii Fet's lyrical ekphrasis inspired by a photograph of Lev Tolstoy's wife in "To a Portrait of S. A. Tolstaya," for example.[5] However, it is only with the dawn of the twentieth century that photography begins to occupy a space in the Russian poetic imagination.

Baudelaire wrote in 1859 of the dangers that photography posed to the imaginative realm, arguing that society must embrace photography's advent only insofar as it would be harnessed as a means to preserve matter and memory that are subject to the wear of time. He was firm in his conviction that photography must not be permitted to cross into the realm of poetry and the creative arts: "if once [photography] be allowed to impinge on the sphere of the intangible and the imaginary, on anything that has value solely because man adds something to it from his soul, then woe betide us!"[6] Others shared Baudelaire's concerns. Stephen Cheeke has demonstrated in his substantial work on photography and elegy that writing about photography "frequently displays an even greater ambivalence, a sharper disquiet about the rival medium" than texts about painting or other visual representations.[7]This discomfort—but also photography's creative potential—emerges in part from the fact that

it became clear in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century culture that even these most mimetic of images, with their tantalizing indexicality, manage to capture and preserve a truth that is fallible, manipulatable, and somehow incomplete. Baudelaire's impassioned writings against photography as an imaginative tool were insufficiently persuasive to stem the tide of experimental encounters that developed between the poetic and the photographic.

Around the time when Boris Pasternak and Marina Tsvetaeva were born in 1890 and 1892, respectively, photography had undergone a series of technological advancements leading to the introduction of the handheld camera and the invention of dry plate technology, which freed the photographer from the tripod and made cameras more accessible to the general public.[8] Pasternak and Tsvetaeva's poetic coming of age coincided with a period of developments in photographic technology that enabled amateurs to use and experiment with cameras in a way that had been previously restricted to professional photographers. The developments in photographic technology in the 1890s also led to a blossoming of the photographic arts in Russia; by the 1910s and 1920s photographers such as Alexander Rodchenko, El Lissitsky, Sergei Tret ′iakov, and Gustav Klutsis were using photography as a part of the development of a new Constructivist, avant-garde aesthetic.[9] At the same time, photojournalists throughout the country were working to capture through the camera lens a picture of industrial productivity and progress in the new Soviet Union.

The intensification, democratization, and diversification of photographic practices meant that Russian poets at this time also turned more actively to photographs and photography, which sometimes inspired new means of imagining in their own process of poetic creation. Just as approaches to photographic aesthetics were increasingly diverse at the turn of the twentieth century so, too, were the poetic responses to photography increasingly varied. Furthermore, these developments coincided with a broader expansion of the subject matter for poetry in Russia's avant-garde period.

In his essay "What Is Poetry?" Roman Jakobson discusses how modernist poets expanded the lyric subject in infinite directions: "No nook or cranny, no activity, landscape, or thought stands outside the place of poetic subject matter."[10] With the advent of literary Modernism, the poet was no longer confined to particular high-style tropes considered to be the proper subject of poetry in the Classicist or Romantic traditions. We can compare this to the evolution in photographic practice,

as well. With the invention of instantaneous photography just before the turn of the twentieth century, photographers were no longer confined to landscapes, still lifes, or portraits of individuals forced to hold a pose through long exposure times. Beyond subject matter, photographs themselves have taken on a certain status as image-object that also delineates the advent of Modernism, as Susan Sontag argues: "Photographs are perhaps the most mysterious of all the objects that make up, and thicken, the environment we recognize as modern. Photographs really are experience captured, and the camera is the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood."[11] Both the subject matter and the creative practice of poetry and photography in the early twentieth century turned toward everyday experience. It is this turn to the vernacular that is this book's central concern. I look not at how poets respond to famous photographs or to photography as high art, but rather at how immersion in a world increasingly defined through engagement with photographic text becomes part of the fabric of poetic expression.[12]

Reading Russian Photo-Poetics

Studies of ekphrasis in poetry tend to focus on painting and sculpture and exclude photography, whereas studies of the influence of photography on literature often exclude poetry. This book joins Andrew Miller's *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis* and Christophe Wall-Romana's *Cinepoetry* as one of the first monographs devoted to the study of the way photography has shaped poetic writing. It is the first work to treat the topic of photography in the Russian poetic imagination.[13]

Wall-Romana asserts that the development of photography and cinema had a profound effect on the postromantic literary imagination and on poetry in particular. He notes that literary criticism tends to resist such correlations or direct causality between "modernity's mediated and technologized experience, and mutations in the postromantic imagination of poetry."[14] Yet, he argues, "there is no a priori reason to believe that technologies such as photography and cinema damage or supplant the imagination in any way, rather than displacing, reterritorializing, reactivating or expanding it. The facts and analysis . . . rather suggest the opposite: that technology has been a powerful catalyst for the poetic imagination."[15] This is indeed the case in the Russian context as well, although previous studies of photography and Slavic poetry, such as those by Aleksandar Bošković, Stephen Hutchings, and Jindřich Toman, focus almost exclusively on photography as

photomontage illustration to poetic text, what Bošković calls "photopoetry."[16]

Studies of the cognitive and creative possibilities of juxtaposing poetic text alongside photographic image or collage represent an important area of critical inquiry, but this book has a different focus. My interest here is in what I call the "poetics of photography" or "photo-poetics," that is, those elements of photographic processes and modes of photographic representation that give rise to new forms of lyric expression. My discussion of photography's poetics engages those aspects of photography that can become the essential creative material of poetry. This includes, for example, the ways that photographic motifs, photochemical metaphors, and the lexicon of photography are written into poetic texts that are not necessarily inspired by actual photographs or are not necessarily printed on the page alongside an accompanying photograph. This broader photo-poetics deals with the qualities of the photograph that bring about poiesis, the creation and production of other imaginative realms. Such qualities include the possibility of instantaneous, fragmented images of real-world experience; a complex relationship with the self and the past; a tension between motion and stasis; distortions of memory; or anticipation of death. Many of these thematic and aesthetic concerns were shared by poets writing before the invention of photography, but the advent of the camera age required new attention to, and methods for, engaging them. As skillful readers of the photograph, the poets featured in this book transform and create something new from their encounters with the medium. They push beyond simply describing photographs or embellishing them with text. Moved by their interactions and encounters with photography, they are challenged to expand the possibilities of poetic expression in new directions. These authors use poetic writing to deepen, enrich, and expand what photographic representation makes possible.

The figures I chose for the case studies discussed in this book represent a careful balance of writers: two women and two men; two poets who spent substantial parts of their lives in emigration and two who remained in the Soviet Union; two poets from the generation that came of age steeped in the aesthetics of the Silver Age, and two whose youth was firmly rooted in post-Stalinist, postwar Soviet culture.[17] But beyond gender, historicization, and stature, this particular selection of poets allows us to examine the role of photography in places where we might anticipate it, and perhaps more revealing, in those where it is unexpected. In two cases, we have writers whose connection to visual

culture in general (Pasternak) and photography in particular (Joseph Brodsky) is well established. Because of their fathers' professional work as painter and illustrator and naval photographer, respectively, it is not surprising to find photographic motifs in their poems; their photo-poetic writings represent some of their most well-known texts. The cases of Tsvetaeva and Bella Akhmadulina, whom we do not typically associate with photography or the visual world, reveal examples of poetic writing that are unambiguously influenced by encounters with the photographic. In Tsvetaeva's case, we find a writer who openly rejects the visual world, who actively writes about writing against the visual. Throughout this book we will see that photography's ubiquity in twentieth-century culture means that it offers tools that even the most visually resistant writers may access at some points in their creative lives. It is difficult to escape the fact that photography has become a cultural phenomenon connected to the way humans in the last century and a half have thought and written about lives, histories, and experiences.

A poet may embrace or actively experiment with photo-poetic writing, or she may write photographically as part of an effort to distance herself from the rigidity of visual experiences. What I demonstrate in this book is that a poet's approach to the photographic is firmly rooted in that individual writer's poetic system. Pasternak, the subject of the first chapter, is primarily drawn to aspects of the photographic process and its technology. His treatment of photography pits the power of the materially embodied photographic print against the technological, temporally fluid process of seeing the world as if through the lens of a camera. The second chapter links Tsvetaeva's interest in photography to her poetic practice by analyzing a series of photographs she took in 1934, following the death of her friend, the aspiring poet Nikolai Gronskii. I connect the images to Tsvetaeva's poetic elegy to Gronskii and contextualize them within her other biographical and artistic encounters with photography, revealing that for Tsvetaeva the photograph operates —like dream motifs, tombstone imagery, and the poetic word itself—as a "third space" in which souls can commune across physical and metaphysical boundaries. Chapter 3 elucidates a critical link between the language of photography and themes of love and loss in Brodsky's poetic world. For Brodsky, photo-poetic writing offers simultaneous access to past, present, and future temporalities; photography represents an essential aesthetic instrument for his writings about mortality, memory, and exile. The fourth chapter investigates the function of photographic motifs in two lyric poems by Akhmadulina, each of which centers on a

description of a woman poet, Akhmadulina's Silver Age predecessors, Tsvetaeva and Anna Akhmatova. The photographic images written into these poems operate as points of departure for Akhmadulina's meditations on the relationship of text and image, and problems of historical memory and poetic lineage. The most compelling aspect of this chapter is the way it explores theoretically how poetic writing unfolds when the object of ekphrastic inspiration is not a real photograph but an imagined one.

Chapter 5 explores how other late- and post-Soviet poets use photographic motifs to access the inner workings of the mind and the dream-like space of the unconscious in their experimental poetry. I examine the connection between photographic processes and Walter Benjamin's notion of the "optical unconscious" in poems by Arkadii Dragomoshchenko and Andrei Sen-Sen'kov, each of whom uses photography as a means of accessing elements of human experience that are hidden from the conscious mind. I argue that contemporary poets' interest in photography's links to the subconscious arises from modernist and late-modernist photo-poetics and continues the pattern of a complex relationship of attraction and resistance between the lyric and the snapshot. The book's coda offers some thoughts on the nature of Russian photo-poetics in the digital age. It considers a poem by Kirill Medvedev, written in 1999, about the damaging illusion of preservation we perpetuate through constant acts of self-documentation. I link Medvedev's central statement about the problem of photography with two 2019 poems by other writers that demonstrate what I propose is a new impulse in present-day poets to resist photography as a substitute for memory.

Common Ontologies: Lyric and Snapshot

A poet writing about a photograph, or one who writes with or through photography—by means of its mechanics and metaphysics—tells a story that necessarily exists beyond the photo frame. A poem crafted from the substance or idea of photography often makes use of those qualities that distinguish lyric poetry from the photograph's indexicality, strange temporality, and fixed two-dimensionality, while at the same time taking advantage of their shared ontologies. In capturing and fixing a moment of experience, both poetic writing and the camera lens operate as a mediated form of vision, recording a moment of human experience in tangible, reproducible, recollectable form. As Lyle Rexer writes in his

introduction to Will Steacy's *Photographs Not Taken*, "the desire to photograph the whole world, all of it, is not an attempt to recover or create memories. It is a need to affirm experience as expressible, if not comprehensible, and to create an aura of talis-manic protection."[18] This sort of "affirmation of experience as expressible" is at the heart of poetic writing as well. Susan Stewart points to the importance of poetry in capturing sensory experiences and transferring them to a reader to bridge the experience of the individual self with knowledge of our broader communities. She writes that, "the task of aesthetic production and reception in general is to make visible, tangible, and audible the figures of persons. . . . As metered language, language that retains and projects the force of individual sense experience and yet reaches toward intersubjective meaning, poetry sustains and transforms the threshold between individual and social existence."[19] Like poetry, photography challenges us to share an intersubjective meaning. Observing how photographs speak to us on the level of both individual and collective consciousness, Liz Heron argues that, "within the same image different eyes will read different truths. We edit and build our own meanings, we extend them beyond the frame. But the image is the starting point. Why does it move us? Not only do its anonymous figures intrigue and tantalise with an arrested fragment of a whole life otherwise unknown, but its simultaneous closeness and distance brings us back to ourselves and our own time."[20]

What is photography's encapsulation of an "arrested fragment of a whole life," if not the heart of lyric poetry? Both poetry and photography make promises about their ability to capture and convey experience in the world, whether a discrete moment of historical time, or the most profound or most pedestrian details of a life. Poems and photographs offer in condensed form a measure of the valences of emotional life and our visual and tactile experiences in space and time. Poetry's special way of making the familiar strange and discovering startling ways of making sense of the world, of our lives and histories, is not unlike photography's way of revealing for us precisely the limits of human vision, something Benjamin has called the "optical unconscious."[21] Photographs show us everything and nothing at all about what the world looks like. Photographic images can create emotional responses and they often urge us to develop a narrative around them, to "return the photographic image to language."[22] They can show us what the world looks like, or they can deceive us into believing entirely illusory things.

In articulating the formal elements that distinguish lyric poetry from

other kinds of writing, Helen Vendler provides a definition that further explores the shared characteristics of lyric and photograph as forms of aesthetic representation. In her essay "Soul Says" she writes of lyric in highly photographic terms, noting that "spontaneity, intensity, circumstantiality; a sudden freeze-frame of disturbance, awakening, pang; an urgent and inviting rhythm; these are among the characteristics of lyric, but there is one other that is even more characteristic, and that is compression."[23] These terms—spontaneity, circumstantiality, disturbance, and compression—are readily applied to a description of the nature of the photographic image. Vendler's "pang" and "disturbance" invoke Roland Barthes's "punctum," the aspect of a photograph that "pricks" the viewer with special poignancy.[24] We can also conceive of a small, framed quality —a compression and intensity—shared by both photographs and lyric poems.[25] Vendler even employs a photographic metaphor in her description of lyric, a "sudden freeze-frame of disturbance." Freeze-frame is a term from cinematography used to designate the repetition of a single shot in the frame, imparting the illusion of a still photograph.[26] Melissa Feuerstein makes this connection explicit when she writes, "there is something about short lyric poems that allows them to function like snapshots—both in terms of the physically portable and formally self-contained presence on the page, and the mode of apprehension this form enables."[27]

The fundamental association of lyric poetry and apostrophe—the mode of "turning away" to address another, usually absent, listener—engenders a discourse between lyric speaker and addressee that parallels the relationship between a photographer and the viewer of a photographic snapshot.[28] The mode of "composing"—in which a lyric "I" corresponds to a camera "eye"—and the subsequent act of "reading" the lyric and photograph bear important similarities. Meaning in the lyric is constructed through a dynamic discursive process that moves from poet to lyric speaker, to the construction of a lyric addressee, who is activated through the reader's direct participation in engaging the text. Similarly, the photographer's act of taking and producing a photograph comes full circle when the photograph is viewed by a "reader" of the visual text.

Photography's manipulation of visual experience (the "eye") and poetry's lyric "I" each work to capture and express an aspect of subjective experience, and the resulting texts are subsequently read in such a way as to give rise to the pondering of details external to the text proper. As Vendler puts it, "lyric is indexical, not exhaustive; it mentions, and the reader is to expand the mention to the whole arc of experience of which

the mention is the sign."[29] A line from a poem by Wallace Stevens describes the poet's daily encounters with and response to life as "a hatching that stared and demanded an answering look."[30] Such a demand for a response is embedded in the nature of the photographic image as well, as Giorgio Agamben explains in his essay on photography: "But there is another aspect of the photographs I love that I am compelled to mention. It has to do with a certain exigency: the subject shown in the photo demands something from us. The concept of exigency is particularly important and must not be confused with factual necessity. Even if the person photographed is completely forgotten today, even if his or her name has been erased forever from human memory—or, indeed, precisely because of this—that person and that face demand their name; they demand not to be forgotten."[31] Poetry and photography each demand a reader's response; at the same time, they meet the demands of art to create, to capture lived experience in a form that we experience as transformative, spontaneous, and highly compressed.

Poems that describe photographs or that use the language or visual imagination of the photographic reveal for us something new about photography, its power, and the limitations of its representational form. In interrogating photographic motifs in the writings of some of the twentieth century's most important Russian-language poets, this book demonstrates how text and image are as inseparable as they are irreconcilable and that text still aims to assert itself as irreplaceable in a world increasingly dominated by image. At the core of each poet's approach to "writing the photograph" is a need to demonstrate the equivalent, and sometimes superior, ability of poetic language to capture and convey human experience.

More Than Ekphrasis: Photographs of the Soul

Pasternak's 1916 poem "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed" (Toska, beshenaia, beshenaia) closes with a fascinating and troubling imperative. The lyric speaker of the poem appeals to a glass cutter to fit into an open frame a "caustically ingrained photograph of my soul" (Dushi moei . . . / Edko v ″evshuiusia fotografiiu). Within the space of these lines that conclude this obscure Futurist poem by one of Russia's most important twentieth-century poets is an image that condenses into itself many of the problems and opportunities that arise when poetry encounters or takes up the photographic. The image embeds in its descriptors photography's associative aesthetic violence ("caustically," "acidly") and its unusual

relationship to time, materiality, and permanency ("etched-in" or "ingrained"). The central noun phrase, a "photograph of my soul" captures with incredible precision the tensions that arise when written word encounters this powerfully precise technology for capturing and preserving an image taken from life. When embedded in the lines of a lyric poem, this phrase issues an aggressive challenge to photography, a challenge that responds directly to the threat photography poses to writing.

What could this mean—a "photograph of [the] soul"—and how does it challenge the limits of the possible? The soul is the essence of a being, yet it is a fully intangible aspect, something that is at once enduring, transcendental, and ephemeral. The soul is invisible and completely defies visualization. It is something that cannot exist in material form. Yet that is what makes this notion of a "photograph of the soul" so tantalizing to the poet. For to use the poetic word to bring into existence the essence of a person or experience—in legible, sometimes tangible poetic form—is to engage in the true project of poetry. Poetry, whether in the form of a love lyric, political polemic, or object poem, is the production of—the voice of—the soul.[32]

It is not only Pasternak who uses the phrase "photograph of the soul." Versions of this concept appear in the works and words of other poets as well, for example in Tsvetaeva's lines "A girlish daguerreotype / of my soul" that conclude her 1931 poem "Home" (Dom) and Joseph Brodsky's assertion in an interview that poems are "like photographs of the soul" (Stikhotvorenie—eto fotografiia dushi).[33] The formula "snapshot of the soul" is an irreconcilable collision of ideas. It is an impossible product because of its simultaneous demand for and rejection of material artifact. Yet within the incompatibility of this irreconcilable phrase is what Foucault called in his meditation on the visual and verbal arts "a starting-point for speech."

> It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say. . . . But if one wishes to keep the relation of language to vision open, if one wishes to treat their incompatibility as a starting-point for speech instead of as an obstacle to be avoided, so as to stay as close as possible to both, then one must . . . preserve the infinity of the task.[34]

To create a photograph of the soul is an impossible, or put differently, an infinite task, which is what makes it so compelling for the poet. Using poetry or photography to access an intangible essence of being is something that is frequently figured as occurring in the space of altered consciousness. The late-Soviet poet-photographer Aleksei Parshchikov makes a similar suggestion about the photographic unconscious, and he warns of the hazards of this realm of altered consciousness, suggesting that photographs present us with dangerous visions, the sort that doom Orpheus on his journey from the underworld: "Photography has never been connected to two-dimensional existence or timetables. It has a visionary task, and it more closely resembles the state of sleep and dreams. Perhaps photography is Orpheus's backward glance and you're better off tearing up the photographs, if you don't want to know too much about what lies ahead."[35]

Photography's anticipation of "what lies ahead" indicates the medium's strong associations with themes of death and mourning. This elegiac accent is part of an almost ritualized use of the photographic trope in poetry: when photography is present as a subject or image in a poem, it often carries with it the pain of the loss of a loved one, the shadow of a future death, or the trace of an encounter that is otherwise irretrievable.

Memento Mori: Photo-Poems and the Specter of Death

In Elena Shvarts's 1972 poem "Elegy on an X-ray of My Skull" (Elegiia na rentgenovskii snimok moego cherepa), the story of the satyr Marsyas's musical duel with Apollo and the resulting punishment of his hubristic performance—the flaying of his skin—sets up Shvarts's meditation on a parallel vision of the self as mortal poet-performer. In Shvarts's poem, it is an X-ray image of the lyric speaker's skull that, like Marsyas's body, has been stripped of skin, exposing within a two-dimensional image the fragility of life, the source of human creativity, and a vision of permanence and impermanence in the same translucent plane.

И мой Бог, помрачась,
Мне подсунул тот снимок,
Где мой череп, светясь,
Выбыв из невидимок,
Плыл, затмив вечер ранний,

Обнажившийся сад;
Был он—плотно-туманный—
Жидкой тьмою объят,
В нем сплеталися тени и облака,
И моя задрожала рука.
Этот череп был мой,
Но меня он не знал,
Он подробной отделкой
Похож на турецкий кинжал—
Он хорошей работы,
И чист он и тверд,
Но оскаленный этот
Живой еще рот . . .[36]

And my God, gloomily,
Slipped me this photo
Where my skull, all aglow,
Having left the realm of invisible beings
Floated, darkening the early evening,
The bared garden;
It was thick and foggy,
Embraced by a liquid darkness,
There were shadows and clouds woven into it,
And my hand trembled.
This skull it was mine,
But it did not know me,
With its detailed inlay
It looks like a Turkish dagger
Of excellent quality
It is clean, it is hard,
But this grimacing mouth
It is alive still . . .

Shvarts's lyric speaker's confrontation with a beautifully illuminated photographic image of her skull evokes thoughts of the speaker's future death. The haunting X-ray image occupies the role of memento mori, while also calling forth the stories of Marsyas, Hamlet, and playful drinking scenes from the social gatherings of the speaker's life. But the speaker, still very much alive, finds in this image of her future death a troubling sort of beauty. Midway through the poem, the speaker poses a

series of plaintive questions, lyrical apostrophes that ask the unanswerable about how to bear this burden of seeing a usually hidden part of the mortal body revealed.

Вот стою перед Богом в тоске
И свой череп держу я в дрожащей руке,—
Боже, что мне с ним делать?
В глазницы ли плюнуть?
Вино ли налить?
Или снова на шею надеть и носить?[37]

I stand in deep sorrow before my God
And I hold the skull in my trembling hand—
God, what am I to do with it?
Spit into the eyesockets?
Pour wine into it?
Or place it back on my neck and wear it again?

Shvarts's poem positions the speaker as confronting a profoundly unsettling, yet playfully posed problem of making sense of how history, creativity, and even the poetic word arise from bodies made of meat, bones, and the soft gray matter of brains. There is something morbid and magical in this confrontation with the X-ray image of the skull. It is a vision that calls forth the wounds of creative figures of the distant past, while at once looking ahead to a future when the lyric speaker's body will return to dust and ashes, to the Word.[38]

Shvarts's cry of "what am I to do with this [image]?" is echoed in another photographic elegy, Polina Barskova's "Dimensionality becomes flatness. This is death itself: . . ." (Ob″em prevrashchaetsia v ploskost′. Eto i est′ smert′ . . .). This is a poem Barskova wrote following the death of writer and journalist Manuk Zhazhoian, who was killed in a car accident in St. Petersburg in June 1997. In mourning Zhazhoian, Barskova was struck by the fact that all that remained of him—at least in material form—were his photographs and his writings. Barskova notes that the journalist was an admirer of Barthes and lived in Paris much of his adult life; his death is one that she calls "a very *Camera Lucida* death."[39] Barskova's poem, like so many poetic texts that use photography to elegize, transforms the photograph's interplay of light and shadow into explorations of the self, mortality and, indirectly, the writing process.

Объем превращается в плоскость. Это и есть смерть:

Фотография, или плита, или, допустим, книга.
То, обо что можно биться, как бабочка,
на что дозволяют смотреть,
Но не слишком пристрастно; с чем говорить, но тихо,
Ибо речь, обращенная к тем, кто не отражает свет,
Заплывает риторикой, сразу омертвевает.
Вопрос, как забытая женщина, ждет ответа. Ответ
Никогда не является. Женщина забывает.
Что теперь, через месяц, мне делать с его лицом,
Глянцевитым и ярким, нарушенным фотопленкой,
Ничего не имеющим общего с тем франтом и гордецом,
Но зато имеющим немало общего с похоронкой?
Что? Хранить, как улику: ОН БЫЛ, ПОСМОТРИТЕ—БЫЛ!
Ну конечно был, говорят, ВОТ ПОБЫЛ И ВЫБЫЛ.
Он был враль, истец, безбожник, мудрец, дебил.
Он был—соль солей, а стал—пучеглазый идол
С выраженьем отсутствия выражения на лице
(Выраженье должно меняться). А фото-льдины—
Лишь упрек в даре зренья, сосредоточенном на мертвеце,
Вероятно, уже безглазом под слоем глины.[40]

Dimensionality turns to flatness. This is death itself:
A photograph, or a tombstone, or, say, a book.
A thing we can knock ourselves against, like a butterfly,
a thing we're permitted to watch,
But not too excitedly; it's a thing you can talk to, but quietly,
For speech directed at those who cannot reflect light back,
Becomes bloated with rhetoric, it deadens immediately.
A question, like a forgotten woman, awaits an answer. The answer
Never comes. The woman forgets.
What am I to do now, a month later, with his face,
Glossy and bright, violated by the photo-film,
Which has nothing in common with that arrogant dandy,
Yet so much in common with an official death notice?
What to do? Save it, like a piece of evidence: *LOOK, HE EXISTED—HE DID*!
But of course he did, they say, *HE WAS HERE, NOW HE'S GONE*.
He was a liar, a plaintiff, an atheist, a sage, a moron.
He was the salt of salts, but became a goggle-eyed idol
With an expression of the absence of expression on his face
(An expression should change). But the photo-ice-flow

Is just a reproach to the gift of vision, focused on a dead man,
Already probably eyeless under a layer of clay.

The photograph here is figured as a poor substitute for its living, embodied referent. The flatness, stillness, and unchanging expression of the man in the photographs are a reproach to—a corruption of—visual acuity and knowledge obtained through sight. The photograph is equated with death, with the same cold finality of a tombstone or, tellingly for this poet, a piece of writing. These markers of mourning—the photograph, the tombstone, the book—are objects that may absorb our grief, in that they permit a certain looking and longing. But for Barskova, there is no consolation in the evidentiary force of Barthes's "that-has-been" because the photograph can never contain the multitudes that made up the man ("a liar, a plaintiff, an atheist, a sage, a moron"). Instead, the lightless, lifeless face in this "photo-ice-flow" (*foto-l'dina*) is nothing but a flat, two-dimensional image that does little to ease the burden of loss. Its illusion of preservation and distorted stilling of the beloved's face only has the effect of intensifying the lyric speaker's fixation on the irreversible deterioration of his body as it degrades in the grave (" already eyeless under a layer of clay.").

In scholarship on photography and elegy, Cheeke and Sontag describe a particular pathos, an almost irresistible urge among poets encountering or imagining a photographic subject to sentimentalize.[41] This pathos is present, for instance, in "Photography" ("Fotografiia"), a poem by Arsenii Tarkovsky (1907–89) written in 1957 and dedicated later to his close friend Olga Grudtsova (1905–82) on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of her father, Soviet-Jewish portrait photographer Moisei Nappel ′baum (1869–1958).[42] This poem sentimentalizes photography's powers of preservation by elevating the photograph to the status of a personified "angel of the camera lens," which takes the beloved under its wings in the form of a photographic portrait. This poem's concept of preservation through photographic intervention centers on the power that photographic image-objects have to provide an enduring, tangible safeguard against faulty and fading memories. The photograph—this "love on the photo-film"—is said to "peck away at oblivion," facilitating the work of remembering in small, incremental ways. We find in this poem yet another reference to the human soul joining with its photographic trace. Furthermore, the essence of the departed is accessible in Tarkovsky's poetic imagination only through altered consciousness, in the sound of whispers and the space of sleep and

dreams.

ФОТОГРАФИЯ

О.М. Грудцовой

В сердце дунет ветер тонкий,
И летишь, летишь стремглав,
А любовь на фотопленке
Душу держит за рукав,

У забвения, как птица,
По зерну крадет—и что ж?
Не пускает распылиться,
Хоть и умер, а живешь—

Не вовсю, а в сотой доле,
Под сурдинку и во сне,
Словно бродишь где-то в поле
В запредельной стороне.

Все, что мило, зримо, живо,
Повторяет свой полет,
Если ангел объектива
Под крыло твой мир берет.[43]

PHOTOGRAPHY

For O.M. Grudstova

In the heart a soft wind blows
And you fly, fly off headlong
But love on the photo-film
Holds the soul by the sleeve

Like a bird it pecks away at oblivion
Stealing seed by seed—and so what?
It won't allow you to dissolve away
Although you died, you still live on

Not completely, but in tiny increments
In a whisper, and in sleep

As if you're wandering in a field
Somewhere in the world beyond

Everything that's dear and visible and alive
Repeats its flight
If the angel of the camera lens
Takes your world under its wing.

Photography as a safeguard against forgetting and as a way to transcend the finality of death is undoubtedly a persistent framing of the photographic trope in poetry. We will encounter photographic elegies throughout this book, but they are far from the only use of photographic language and imagery in Russian poetic writing. What other frameworks do we have for exploring and conceptualizing how encounters with photography have transformed the Russian poetic landscape?

Theorizing Photo-Poetics beyond Ekphrasis

In his 2015 *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis* Andrew D. Miller outlines a typology of what he calls the "chronotope of the photograph," which he deploys to explore poems in several world languages from the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries that center on an ekphrastic description of a photograph. Miller analyzes poems in which the speaker appears to have direct encounters with photographic images, whether real or imagined.[44] Miller identifies subclasses of the ekphrasis of the photograph, categories that include, among others, the "snapshot elegy," in which the poetic speaker accesses the dead using the photograph; the "iconic photograph," that is, poems describing or addressing famous images, texts that take advantage of the readers' shared understanding of the photograph's cultural significance; the "ekphrastic calligram," a poem that is accompanied on the page by a printed version of the photographic image with which it engages; the "suppressed ekphrasis," poems inspired by photographic images, the photographic source of which goes unmentioned or unacknowledged; and the "anti-ekphrasis," in which the speaker describes a photograph only to then undermine the description and expose it as a lie.

Miller's typology offers a valuable set of tools for engaging the problem of what happens when poetry takes photography as its subject. Although Miller does not analyze Russian poetic texts, we can apply his concepts to Russian poems that describe photographs. An evocative

example from Russian of a photographic "anti-ekphrasis" poem, is Vladimir Nabokov's 1927 "A Snapshot" (Snimok), in which a sunny, smiling family photograph on the beach becomes an ironic, violent abduction when it is revealed that the image of an unwilling subject, the displaced lyric speaker, was captured in the background of the group portrait.[45]

мой облик меж людьми чужими,
один мой августовский день,
моя не знаемая ими,
вотще украденная тень.

my countenance among these strangers
my one August day
my unknown to them
here my stolen shadow.[46]

Miller's term "snapshot elegy" is relevant to a poem like Mayakovsky's 1929 "Conversation with Comrade Lenin" (Razgovor s tovarishchem Leninym) written for the fifth anniversary of Lenin's death, in which Maya-kovsky's lyric speaker directly addresses a photograph of the Bolshevik leader. In a manner anticipated by Miller's definition of this subclass, Maya-kovsky's speaker describes Lenin's physical features in the photograph, imagines the circumstances of the snapshot, and then addresses the deceased leader directly.[47] With the photographic image as surrogate, he reassures himself, Lenin, and the people that the revolutionary mission will continue, that Lenin's project and legacy will live on and flourish.

«. . . Товарищ Ленин,
по фабрикам дымным,
по землям,
покрытым
и снегом
и жнивьём,
вашим,
товарищ,
сердцем
и именем
думаем,
дышим,

боремся
и живем!..»
Грудой дел,
суматохой явлений
день отошел,
постепенно стемнев.
Двое в комнате.
Я
и Ленин—
Фотографией
на белой стене.[48]

". . . Comrade Lenin,
in smoky factories
On snow-covered
lands
and on stubbly
fields,
with you
in our hearts,
your name
on our lips
we think,
we breathe,
we fight,
and we live! . . ."
Awhirl with events,
with tasks one too many,
the day receded
and gradually darkened.
There are two in the room:
I
and Lenin—
a photograph
on a white wall.

Although a set of categories for making sense of patterns emerging from descriptions of photographs in poetry represents an important scholarly contribution, Miller's typology has its limits. His "chronotope of the photograph," valuable as it is, does little to account for a broader

photo-poetics, those qualities of the photographic that enable the production of other imaginative realms. To illustrate how using only the tools of ekphrastic analysis limits our understanding of photo-poetic texts, let us turn to one of the most famous narrative poems in the Russian tradition to feature photographic aesthetics, Vladislav Khodasevich's *Sorrento Photographs* (Sorrentinskie fotografii).

If we try to read *Sorrento Photographs* in terms of the categories of photoekphrasis, it becomes apparent that some photo-poetic texts simply do not fit neatly into Miller's typology. Many cases exist across global poetry where a poem is built around a description of a photograph, but just as often, a poet may write with photography, through photography, using the language, techniques, or metaphorical potential of the photograph to make sense of the modern human condition in ways that are quite independent of any photograph. *Sorrento Photographs* is one such text. Khodasevich moves beyond the poetics of ekphrasis, instead employing the photographic trope to suggest more about the nature of memory and the experience of exile.

In *Sorrento Photographs*—and in other works of early twentieth-century émigré writing in Russian—the trope of the double-exposed photograph becomes a vehicle for merging the experiences of homeland and emigration through layers of vision and memory.[49] Khodasevich takes what he deems the careless mistake of double exposure committed by a "scatterbrained photographer" (*fotograf-rotozei*) and transforms it into an intriguing visual metaphor for his own life's path.

Двух совместившихся миров
Мне полюбился отпечаток:
В себе виденья затая,
Так протекает жизнь моя.

the imprint of two worlds
telescoped caught my fancy:
concealing in itself a vision,
so does my life flow by.[50]

The photographic double exposure operates as a point of departure for a fluid amalgam of memories arising from places as disparate as Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the Italian coast. This poema is about the collision of time and revolution, and about memory and its fallibility and mutability. Margarita Nafpaktitis wrote about Khodasevich's use of photographic

principles in *Sorrento Photographs* that "the poema engages the differences between photography and poetry, even as they seek to represent the same experience."[51] The poem's final lines suggest that the future that will overlay the double-exposed images of the so-called Sorrento photographs is a dark and unknowable one; it is one that will emerge as a shadow in the wake of waves of death and destruction.

Воспоминанье прихотливо.
Как сновидение—оно
Как будто вещей правдой живо,
Но так же дико и темно
И так же, вероятно, лживо . . .
Среди каких утрат, забот
И после скольких эпитафий
Теперь, воздушная, всплывет
И что закроет в свой черед
Тень соррентинских фотографий?

Memory is capricious.
Like a dream, it seems
alive with prophetic truth,
but is just as wild and obscure
and, probably, just as false . . .
Amidst what losses and troubles,
and after how many epitaphs,
now, belonging to the air, will it surface,
and what shall overlay in turn
the shadow of Sorrento photographs?[52]

Although the notion of double-exposed photographs brings forth a set of mismatched memories from the speaker's present and former lives, this is not a poem that offers ekphrastic descriptions of any particular photographs. Rather, the idea of two worlds, two pasts, coexisting in the same photographic image, or within the experiences of a single individual, propels the poet to unspool memories of his past in an almost cinematic fashion. Illuminated by the projector-like headlight of a motorcycle speeding through the hills of the Amalfi coast, Khodasevich's Italian setting and the memories that emerge there from a former life in Russia provide readers with a good deal more than descriptions of photographic images.[53] Khoda sevich's imitation of photographic

technique is not meant to reproduce the effect of looking at or developing photographic images. Instead, in *Sorrento Photographs* we have an example of a poet writing with and through photography. Within the text of the poem lies a phrase that suggests precisely these multiple ways of constructing visual experience: "I see . . . in them, through them and between them" (Ia vizhu . . . v nikh, skvoz′ nikh i mezhdu nikh). This is a text that uses photographic double exposure to evoke the experience of vision colliding with memory in the space of emigration and across multiple temporalities.

In exploring photographic motifs, influences, and writing strategies in the works of Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, Brodsky, Akhmadulina, and others, we will encounter descriptions of photographs and unpack how photographic metaphors operate in writing about the self. Furthermore, we will uncover ways that photography and writing can operate as analogical practices, that is, that writers can be drawn to models of writing that can "assum[e] the characteristics of photography as a medium."[54] Some of the poems discussed in this book are ekphrastic descriptions inspired by actual photographs, but just as often the qualities that distinguish photography from other representational forms are the elements that are borrowed for the purposes of poetic expression. Through its mode of figuring presence and absence in the same plane, and its way of capturing a fleeting moment of experience that endures in material form, photography offers poets a mode of contemplating loss, a deeply personal search for refuge, and opportunities to build and sustain their poetic projects.

Chapter 1

Illuminating Consciousness

Pasternak's Poetics of Photography

Single Days

На протяженье многих зим	Across the span of many winters
Я помню дни солнцеворота,	I recall the solstice days,
И каждый был неповторим	Each one was unique and unrepeatable
И повторялся вновь без счета.	And each recurred anew without limit.
Составилась мало-помалу—	Was built slowly, piece by piece —
Тех дней единственных, когда	Of unique days, when
Нам кажется, что время стало.	It seems to us that time stood still.
Зима подходит к середине,	Winter approaches its midpoint
Дороги мокнут, с крыш течет	Roads are wet and rooftops drip
И солнце греется на льдине.	And the sun warms itself on the ice-floe.
Друг к другу тянутся поспешней,	Hurry quickly toward the other
И на деревьях в вышине	And high up in the trees
Потеют от тепла скворешни.	Nesting boxes grow sweaty from the heat.
Ворочаться на циферблате,	To turn around on the clock face,
И дольше века длится день,	And a day lasts more than a century,
И не кончается объятье.[1]	And never-ending is the embrace.

Boris Pasternak's final completed poem, the 1959 lyric "Singular Days" (Edinstvennye dni), initially does not appear to be connected with the theme of photographs or photographic technology. Photography is not the subject of the poem, nor is the language of photography present in this poem on any discernable level. Yet it is photography—the technology of fixing momentary experiences in a form that can be continually revisited—that serves as the conceptual framework for this poem's temporality. The photo-poetic elements that underpin this poem's relationship with time and memory are those that are rooted in Pasternak's early poetry and philosophical orientation to time, image, and technology. This chapter traces the way that links between photography and creativity are established, developed, and sustained in Pasternak's poetry and other writings over several decades of his writerly life.

One of the more challenging aspects of scholarship that tells how photographic technology has shaped literary and artistic creation in the twentieth century is the problem of how to explain the effect of the medium on artistic texts that are not explicitly about photography. To read a poem like "Singular Days" in terms of photo-poetics, we must ask how the proliferation of camera technology and photographic representation have shifted our conceptions of time and the way we record and remember our lives and our days. What I test here is the claim that Pasternak's "Singular Days" is a poem that could not have been written before the advent of photography. This is a text that could have come into being only in an environment firmly rooted in twentieth-century technology and the philosophical inquiries that accompanied, through direct or indirect influence, developments in instantaneous photography.

This chapter's exploration of Pasternak's use of the lexicon and metaphor of photography in his poetry and prose will elucidate the way that the depiction of time in "Singular Days" is consistent with the writer's broader conception of the problem of time as it relates to the photographic. Motifs built around the technological mechanisms of the camera offer Pasternak a means to convey a tension between motion and stasis, between static and dynamic aspects of human experience and the natural world. This tension between fixity and flow is a key artistic concern of Pasternak's as he strives to capture and preserve phenomenological experiences, human emotions, and historical events in lyric form. Photographic motifs are a key vehicle for developing these ideas in his early lyrics, and his use of such imagery sets the stage for

later developments in his work; we find them present in the historical epics of the 1920s and in passages of the novel *Doctor Zhivago*. Key conceptual elements remain even in this late lyric poem, "Singular Days." This chapter traces the development of Pasternak's interest in photography and the way photographic motifs in his poetry allow him to develop means of depicting divergent philosophical conceptions of time, the power of light as a creative force, and the exquisite potential for poetry to capture and preserve ephemeral moments of lived experience.

Visual Poetics in Pasternak

The role of visual perception and the influence of the visual arts in Boris Pasternak's creative world is a topic that has been examined thoroughly by scholars of the poet's life and work, and it is well established that the experience of visual perception is of major importance in Pasternak's artistic philosophy. Yuri Lotman, for example, characterizes the role of the visual in Pasternak's poetics in the following way: "The true world is not only empirical but, for Pasternak, it is the only authentically empirical thing; it is a world, *seen* and *felt*, as opposed to the world of words and phrases. . . . Therefore those authentic connections that organize Pasternak's world—a world of desecrated routine linguistic connections—are almost always *seen* connections [*uvidennye*]. . . . In the same way, Pasternak's central idea is a *seen* idea."[2] Pasternak demonstrates a particular skill in expressing with great precision the experience of apprehending the beauty of the natural world visually. Such keen powers of observation serve as a catalyst to merge the natural world with the world of human emotion. For example, in his short lyric, "Hops" (Khmel'), from the *Doctor Zhivago* poems, it is a sharpening of visual perception that reveals the lyric persona's initial error in "reading" or comprehending visually the scene he describes.

Под ракитой, обвитой плющом,
От ненастья мы ищем защиты.
Наши плечи покрыты плащом.
Вкруг тебя мои руки обвиты.

Я ошибся . . . Кусты этих чащ
Не плющом перевиты, а хмелем.
Ну, так лучше давай этот плащ
В ширину под собою расстелем.[3]

Beneath these willows, ivy-choked,
The rain has chased us off to hide,
Our shoulders wrapped inside a cloak,
My arms around your figure twined.

But look—I'm wrong. This willow grove
Is not with ivy choked, but hops!
So come . . . we'll take this heavy cloak
To spread beneath us as a drop.[4]

As Susanna Witt notes, the lyric speaker of this poem takes a second look ("Not with ivy choked, but hops!"), and his newly clarified vision leads to an emotional transformation in the posture and mood of the lovers: from huddled, chilly, and sober to open, warm, and intoxicated.[5] In the second and third stanzas of another poem from 1941, "Pine Trees" (Sosny), the lyric speaker becomes similarly immersed in the natural world through an intense visual experience that is then linked to emotional and metaphysical transformations:

Трава на просеке сосновой
Непроходима и густа.
Мы переглянемся—и снова
Меняем позы и места.

И вот, бессмертные на время,
Мы к лику сосен причтены
И от болезней, эпидемий
И смерти освобождены.[6]

The grass in the clearing among the pines
Stands impenetrable and thick.
We'll exchange glances, and once again
Shift sides and change positions.

And now, immortal for a moment,
We are numbered among the trees
And from illness, epidemics
And death we are set free.

This moment of visual intensity shared between the speaker and his beloved is precipitated by the action "my pereglianemsia" ("we'll

exchange glances"). The speaker's momentary suspension in an indeterminate space outside of natural time transpires at this moment of human visual connection. Described in the colloquial perfective future, the language of the poem further emphasizes both the momentariness and the habit of the action. The poem's central figures become "immortal for a moment"; they are transferred to a temporal plane that, for just an instant, protects them from death and disease ("And from illness, epidemics / And death we are set free"). In a sense, this poem's stilling of time as a means to open a space for immortality employs an unspoken poetics of photography; that is, the photo-camera's ability to capture and preserve a moment outside the natural wear of time is at work here, despite no mention of photographs or cameras. Just as important here is the historical context; the poem was written in 1941, the year Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. Death and destruction were happening all around Pasternak, while he used poetry about the natural world to hold human interactions in a space free of violence.

This poem is emblematic of Pasternak's broader skill in transforming an intense visual experience into a catalyst for connections between the natural world and the realm of human emotion. Pasternak's manipulations of time and visual imagery are what distinguishes him as one of the most celebrated writers of the twentieth century. Marina Tsvetaeva famously characterizes his reliance on visual acuity as a key element distinguishing Pasternak's poetry from her own: "In poetry Pasternak SEES, but I HEAR."[7] Pasternak credited fellow poet Rainer Maria Rilke with teaching him "the skill of seeing and loving" (umeni[e] videt′ i liubit′).[8] Pasternak repeatedly invokes the power of vision as a key element in his creative life. In 1914, as a young man just beginning to formulate a philosophy of art and creativity, Pasternak describes the artist's role as mediator of human experience in highly visual terms: "It seems to me that artistic talent consists of this: one must *see*—fatefully, instinctively and without artifice—in the same way that others think and, vice versa, *think* the way others *see*."[9]

Several scholars have approached the complexities of Pasternak's visual poetics by studying the influence of painting and painters on Pasternak's approach to writing.[10] The poet's father was the renowned painter Leonid Osipovich Pasternak (figure 1.1), and Boris's childhood interest in sketching led some to believe for a time that he might follow in his father's footsteps.[11] Although the young Pasternak's professional aspirations shifted from painter to musician to philosopher before finally resting on poet, the world of visual art continued to shape his poetic

practice in important ways.[12]

More revealing for my purpose are Pasternak's letters and essays that address the limits of the snapshot's representational potential. In his personal correspondence in the years leading up to the publication of his 1922 collection *My Sister Life* (*Sestra moia zhizn'*) we find evidence of the interactions he had with photography at a time when he was actively carving out his identity as a poet. Such biographical links to photographic practices elucidate the ways that the language and metaphor of photography serve to expand the range of expressive possibilities in Pasternak's poetry, allowing the technological to "reterritorialize" the natural world.[13] This is particularly evident in *My Sister Life*, a collection that employs photographic motifs in many of its poems.

Figure 1.1. Leonid Pasternak and his son Aleksandr Pasternak prepare paintings for the Exhibition of Union of Russian Artists, Moscow, 1911. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.130.

Pasternak Photographed and Photographing

A detailed examination of specific mentions of photography in his letters and other writings reveals that, while Pasternak was often critical of photographic portraits, he also thought a fair amount about what good photography ought to be like. Pasternak believed that photography more often than not had a distorting, vulgarizing effect on the subject of the photographic portrait. At the same time, the writer acknowledged that through a rare merging of a skilled photographer with the right combination of dynamically charged circumstances, a photographic portrait might offer a highly compelling image of its subject.

Pasternak did not consider himself to be especially photogenic, and this antipathy toward his own likeness in photographs contributed to his ambivalence about the medium from an artistic standpoint. In his letters he derides photographs of himself and expresses frustration with the photographic portrait's distorting effect. For instance, in a 1932 letter to Zoia Nikitina regarding a forthcoming publication of his poetry, Pasternak requests that the book be issued without an author photograph on the grounds that he "rarely turns out well in photographs."[14] Photographs, he continues, also have a tendency to "highlight aspects of my physical appearance . . . that I find irksome."[15] In a 1926 letter to Tsvetaeva, Pasternak likens his own image to that of something subhuman ("I usually end up looking like a cretin or a gorilla"), a comparison that he makes more than once.[16] The gorilla reference was still in active use nearly twenty-five years later: "Here are two photographs taken by Zina. They're dim and cloudy, but I wanted to send them to you because I so rarely turn out looking like a person and not a gorilla in photographs" (figures 1.2 and 1.3).[17]

In another letter to his parents from 1932, Pasternak expresses further dissatisfaction with the supposed verisimilitude of photographic portraits. This time it is not his own likeness that he criticizes, but that of someone else close to him. Enclosing three photographs of Zinaida Nikolaevna Neigauz, he describes them as follows: "I am sending three photographs of Zina, all unflattering. The closest resemblance is the small detail from one of the dacha group photos, in which her younger son's head is next to hers. That one was taken five years ago, and the bigger

photographs are from the summer of 1930. Zina is very pretty, but on both of the other photos, her appearance is completely vulgarized. I mean, maids are photographed in this manner! I really didn't want to send you these overly smiling photos of her."[18] Pasternak finds the awkward practice of posing for pictures to be vulgarizing and irksome. In fact, with the advent of instantaneous photography and new

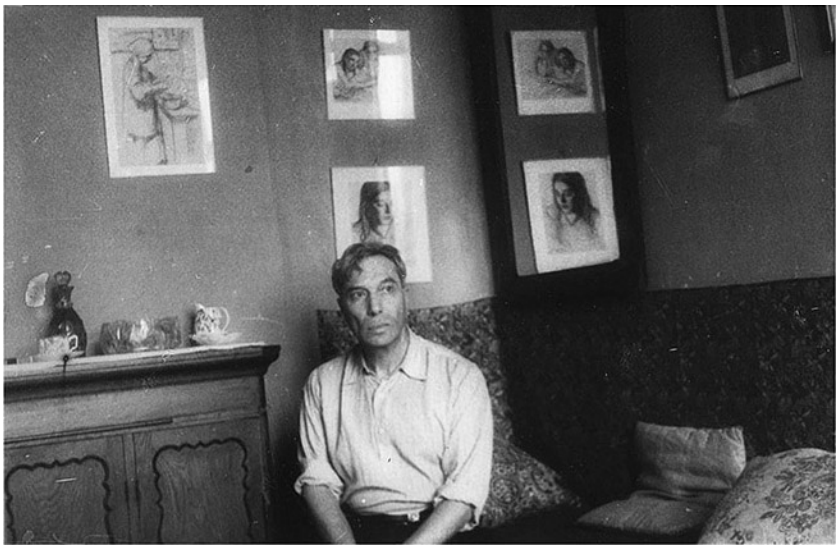


Figure 1.2. Boris Pasternak, 1950. Photograph by Zinaida Neigauz-Pasternak. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.426.

Figure 1.3. Boris Pasternak, 1950. Photograph by Zinaida Neigauz-Pasternak. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.427.

aesthetic goals in photojournalism and avant-garde and Futurist art movements in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, posing for portraits had come to be viewed by many as a stale relic of a time when photography required long exposure times, and thus extended sessions of posing for portraits.

Figure 1.4. Boris and Evgeniia Pasternak with their son, Evgenii, Moscow, July 23, 1924. Photograph by Moisei Nappel'baum. Image courtesy of Evgenii Borisovich Pasternak and the Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.182.

In Pasternak's fiction, we find a similar dissonance between photographic images and real-world perceptions. In an early chapter of

Doctor Zhivago , Yuri Zhivago's impression of the son he had long seen only in photographs turns out to be different from how the boy actually looks:

> Yuri Andreevich came to know [his son] only through photographs, which were sent to him on the front lines. In them he saw a cute, happy baby with a large head and a bow-shaped mouth. . . . He was one year old at the time and was learning to walk.
>
> Now he was turning two and was starting to talk. . . . The boy in the crib turned out to be not at all the handsome young child that he appeared to be in the pictures, although he was the spitting image of Yuri's mother, the late Maria Nikolaevna Zhivago. The boy was an exact replica of his grandmother—in fact, he looked more like her than any of the photographs of her that remained after her death.[19]

In the case of both Yuri's mother and his son, family resemblance is infinitely more palpable in person—and in one's memory—than it is in a photographic reproduction. Photographs in this passage of the novel provide distinctly misleading cues about the nature of resemblance.

Though often critical of his own photographs, Pasternak does occasionally praise images that he finds to be skillfully rendered. What are the conditions for a successful portrait in Pasternak's view? One criterion for a successful photograph is that it captures the living, dynamic essence of a person, a trace of the body in motion. Just how does Pasternak imagine that one could capture dynamic motion in the form of a static photographic image? In relating to Tsvetaeva the circumstances that led to the creation of a rare flattering portrait at the studio of the well-known Petersburg photographer Moisei Nappel'baum (figure 1.4), Pasternak emphasizes the way that a variety of external factors led to the photographer successfully capturing his image. The key, he reports, is that the picture was successful because he was photographed "in all aspects instantaneously" (vo vsekh otnosheniiakh momental'no).

> By the way, you once spoke of a photograph. . . . The only time I turned out well in a photo was because I was photographed in all aspects instantaneously. They were taking pictures of Zhenia and our boy in the photographer's studio, and everything was set up and ready to go, when they invited me to join the picture. I didn't

> even have a chance to collect myself, it just turned out. That is, I turned out well. I was overheated—it was summer time in Petersburg—and I had just carried the boy up six flights of stairs, and in the attic studio, under the skylight window it was very stuffy. Usually I come out looking like a cretin or a gorilla—which, in actuality, and not only in the slice of an instant—I am.[20]

Although there is little in the resulting family portrait to suggest the heated, hurried scene that apparently took place in the moments leading up to the one captured, Pasternak emphasizes the motion and physicality of the moment: the sweltering heat, his exhaustion from having climbed six flights of stairs carrying his young son, the suddenness of the invitation to pose with his family. He attributes the success of the image to the spontaneity of his entering the photo frame. Though the still photograph without Pasternak's explanation betrays little of this dynamic backstory, we see in Pasternak's interpretation of the image evidence of the centrality of the interplay of motion and stasis that lies at the heart of this writer's simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from photography's ability to still and preserve moments from life.

Descriptions of photographs from Pasternak's letters indicate that the poet possessed particular standards for how photographs are to depict an experience (or a person) in its best light. He recognizes at once the potential for a photograph to capture a moment in time in an unusually profound and revealing way, but he is also aware—from the multitude of poor photographs he encounters all around him—that photographic snapshots often fall short of the medium's potential. Whether it is in the observation of photographs that surround him in his life, or the use of photographic motifs and metaphors in his poetry, it is precisely this tension that is at the heart of Pasternak's photo-poetic thinking. The conflict—between photography's tremendous potential to capture and convey human experience in art and its often disappointing product—plays out in complex ways at key junctures in the poet's creative works.

Innovations in Soviet Photography Theory

Pasternak's thinking about the problem of photography's potential to capture motion and dynamism echoes in important ways the broader debates occurring in Russia at the time concerning what photography should accomplish and how photographers should approach their craft. In Alexander Rodchenko's "Against the Summary Portrait in Favor of the

Instantaneous Snapshot" (Protiv summirovannogo portreta za momental'nyi snimok) the renowned Soviet photographer argues that, with the advent of photography, experience can no longer be captured as a single summary portrait. Instead, the best way to convey truth through images is through "many sums," that is, in the archiving of scores of photographs and other forms of documentary evidence: "We must state firmly that, with the advent of photo-documents, there can be no discussion of any single indisputable portrait. Moreover, a person is not just a single sum; rather, he is made up of many sums, some of which are entirely antithetical to one another."[21]

Photographic aesthetics were at the center of early Soviet debates about how to capture and represent Soviet reality in new forms of visual media.[22] Anatolii Lunacharskii proclaimed in 1923 that in the Soviet Union "there will be universal literacy in general and also a photographic literacy in particular."[23] Pasternak's personal ire with the stilted, posed photographic portrait was actually part of a shifting artistic sentiment during this early modernist period, as photography evolved from a medium requiring long exposure times—and therefore long periods of posing before the camera—to a more technologically speedy, efficient, and accessible practice. In the new age of instantaneous snapshots and handheld cameras, Pasternak's preference for a poetics of dynamic motion derives from a broader interest in conveying motion and speed in Russian modernist art.[24] Instructions to professional photographers working for photography-specific news agencies—*Press-klishe* and *Rusfoto*, for instance—insisted that workers in the Soviet Union be portrayed in photographs not as static, motionless, idle bodies; instead, photographers were encouraged to compose their photographs such that they would capture workers in a dynamic state.[25] Professional photojournalists were to photograph citizen-workers not in posed groups, but in candid shots and compositionally fragmented closeups suggestive of motion, progress, and productivity. As Christopher Stolarski notes, "the popular aesthetic of posed pictures . . . as well as the staged quality of the studio aesthetic, represented the antithesis of photo-reportage. The visual dynamism of photo-reportage animated the presumed dynamism of the Soviet industrial economy."[26] Although Pasternak's concerns were less with the Soviet industrial economy than the nature of human experience in the natural world, the new photographic aesthetic of speed and motion had a palpable influence on the shape of his dynamic photo-poetic writing.

Pasternak's sense of the photograph's potential within the new Soviet avant-garde aesthetic to capture motion in a fully dynamic way is echoed

by writer and literary critic Osip Brik in several articles he wrote on photography in 1926–28. His article from 1928 in *Novyi LEF*, "From Painting to Photograph" (Ot kartiny k foto) presents a theoretical meditation on what distinguishes photography from painting, a topic that had been debated continually from the moment of photography's invention in 1839.[27] Here Brik clearly articulates the very tension between motion and stasis that is at the heart of Pasternak's thinking about photography and its role in his poetic practice:

> The essential thing that the illustrator [or painter] is concerned with is a maximally stationary object. . . . A photographer, on the other hand, has the potential to capture an object in great detail in an incredibly short segment of time; therefore, the motion/mobility of an object does not hamper his work. But for a painter to work successfully, he needs a completely still subject.
>
> However, because in reality objects are in constant motion, particularly relative to other objects in their general proximity, any attempt to still nature for the purposes of painting will inevitably be artificial. A photographer—and this is the fundamental difference—can capture the continuity of an event. In order to photograph something, the photographer does not manipulate nature; instead, he can take advantage of nature as it is—before, during and after the picture is taken. This necessity is dictated by the fact that, Strastnaia Square [in Moscow], for example, is not in and of itself a complete, closed entity, but is simply a point of intersection for various temporal and spatial occurrences. A painter cannot render this point of multiple intersections in a fully dynamic way. He has to stop motion; otherwise, he cannot fix it. But stopped motion doesn't provide the interrelation of parts, which is necessary for a static object; therefore, the artist is forced to reorganize these very objects, which have been fixed in place. The photographer is not obliged to stop motion. He can capture it on the fly, and if he cannot convey it, he can suggest it.[28]

We often think of the act of photographing as the process of fixing a moment in time, while a great deal more complexity exists in the relationship between the photographic image and time.[29] This idea that the photograph is in continual dialogue with different forms of temporal representation is not a new one, and it has general application within

debates about the relationship between poetry and the visual arts more broadly.[30]

A key piece of scholarly writing on the intersection of the visual arts and poetry that we can employ here to understand the particular appeal of photographic motifs for Pasternak is Murray Krieger's 1967 article "Ekphrasis and the Still Movement of Poetry; or *Laokoon* Revisited."[31] Krieger challenges Lessing's classic argument that the plastic arts (e.g., painting) are the best vehicle for spatial representation, whereas the verbal arts (e.g., poetry) are best for representing time, due to the "temporality of the verbal sequence."[32] Krieger argues that poetry can essentially have it both ways; while acknowledging the sequential capacity of the words on a page, Krieger also finds what he refers to a "forever-now motion" in the patterns of repetition and echo in the sound and sense of poetry.[33] His conclusion is that the best poetry possesses the capacity for "still movement," a concept that I extend here to photography. Pasternak is attracted to this "still movement" quality of the photographic image, and he makes use of its status as an "ongoing moment" in his poetic writing inspired by the medium.

Visual Technologies in Pasternak's Early Years

The many references to optical devices found in the "I'm a Schoolboy" (Ia gimnazist) chapter of *A Vanished Present* (Vospominaniia), the memoirs of Boris Pasternak's brother, Aleksandr (figure 1.5), offer an intimate view of how the former may have experienced the evolution in visual technologies that were taking place at the turn of the twentieth century, a progression that includes the popularization of instantaneous (snapshot) photography and culminates in the introduction of film into world culture.[34] In the course of recalling his early years, beginning with 1903, Aleksandr Pasternak demonstrates a particular fascination with the newly accessible technologies for capturing the visual world in documentary forms. He writes of a crumbling, faded photograph of a beloved teacher who was sent to fight in the Russo-Japanese War; we also learn of his adventures in discovering botany and paleontology with newer forms of light microscope technology. But it is the sequence of three final episodes of the chapter—devoted to the magic lantern, photographic flip-books, and early cinema newsreels—that reveals the transformative effect of a changing visual culture on Aleksandr and Boris's immersions in the evolving modernist modes of perception. These descriptions of episodes involving developments in visual technologies

from the Pasternak brothers' early years give us insight into the interplay of motion and stasis that lies at the heart of Boris Pasternak's philosophical orientation toward the photographic.

The evolution from still photographs to motion pictures that takes place over the course of these three vignettes elucidates the underlying importance of precise detail and dynamic motion in Boris Pasternak's understanding of visual representation; these are central ideas that motivate his use of photographic motifs in his verse writing. In the first episode, Aleksandr recalls the transformation of the family living room into a viewing theater,

Figure 1.5. Brothers Aleksandr (left) and Boris (right) Pasternak, Moscow, March 22, 1898. Photograph by K. Fischer. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.48.

as his mother—and later, Boris—gathered the children to view the

spectacle of early projection technology, the magic lantern (*volshebnyi fonar'*).[35] Aleksandr's account of these evenings emphasizes a particular aspect of this technology that was of central importance to him and his siblings: the moment when their mother sharpened the focus and the projected image transformed before their eyes into an impeccably clear, larger-than-life image: "To tell the truth, it wasn't the subject and quality of the pictures that counted; although we knew them inside out, we still met them like new acquaintances. No, the charm evidently lay in the adjustment of the *focus*—a magic word, which in Mama's presentation became a kind of conjuror's *hocus-pocus*! With that, the little pictures would suddenly loom almost human size on the screen, and their watery blur contract to a crisp outline."[36]

The clarity of vision represented by the magic lantern's fine-tuned focusing is emblematic of a similar clarity of vision that defines Boris Pasternak's poetry, particularly his poetry on nature and the natural world. This is exemplified, for example, in the sharpening of focus in the lyric "Khmel'."[37] As Kornei Chukovskii described, Pasternak's verse places tremendous emphasis on precision of detail: "The special thing about his verses on nature is their concreteness, determinateness, and their precision. They are all drawn from life. In each there is, if you will, a portrait-like resemblance. All of his landscapes match the original down to the minutest detail. . . . The pinnacle of realism, according to Pasternak, is achieved only when the artist is able to reproduce the finest details of life in his work, just as they appear to him at that precise moment of perception."[38] This notion that the artist achieves his goal through mastery of precision of detail and the ability to capture a moment resonates profoundly with early observations of the power of photographic technology, and indeed Chukovskii goes on to liken Pasternak's poetic process to the act of taking photographs ("it's as if he makes instantaneous photos from it" [on delaet kak by momental'nye snimki s nee]). This description recalls Edgar Allan Poe's ecstatic declaration of the virtues of the daguerreotype and the ability of this early form of photographic technology to capture details from life that were "infinitely more accurate in [their] representation than any painting by human hands."[39]

The manner in which Boris Pasternak came to fully comprehend the particular properties of photographs that distinguish them from painting is also revealed in his brother's recollections, as memories of the magic lantern evenings subsequently shift forward to a time when Boris had taken over the role of lantern projectionist, and the apparatus had begun

to deteriorate. Boris's failed attempt to construct newly painted slides to replace the old decrepit ones served as a lesson on the nature of painting versus photography.

> Boris, who had taken over from our mother by this time, decided to extend the old stock of pictures by painting new ones on tracing paper begged from our father. But he didn't foresee that all their sense would be lost when they were magnified many times their size. Our disappointed younger sisters clamoured for the old originals, which Boris slotted into the projector, jiggling it about so that everything on the screen began to move, like shipwrecks and earthquakes of the early cinema. The spirit of the new century was partially reflected in Boris's innovation; there was already an impulse to animation in the air.[40]

Boris had failed to fully grasp the distortion of detail that projection and lens technology would have on a projected image of a drawing but, in his brother's estimation, he redeemed himself before his siblings by drawing on the fascination with motion that was so central in early modernist and Futurist aesthetics.[41]

Aleksandr also recalls a set of photographic flip-books that Karl Pasternak, the boys' uncle, sent from Vienna. There was a series depicting a horse and rider leaping various gates and obstacles; an album showing Austrian soldiers conducting marching exercises; and a third album relaying scenes from a crowded, chaotic, traffic-filled European street.[42] "This was a set of attractive albums with what looked like ordinary snapshots, stuck on to thick paper and stoutly bound. But neither albums nor photographs were ordinary at all: when you turned the pages over, quickly and smoothly, the dead pictures suddenly came to life. Under your very eyes!"[43]

By 1904, the technology that allowed for these serial photographs was already more than twenty years old, originally achieved in 1878 by Eadweard Muybridge, the British artist-photographer working in California, who used a device called a Phenakistoscope or Zoopraxiscope to photograph Governor Leland Stanford's horses (figure 1.6). The images, taken in rapid succession, served at once to dissect motion into its component parts and reveal secrets hitherto unknown; for example, moments during a gallop when all four of a horse's hooves are off the ground simultaneously. Muybridge's tremendously popular *Animal Locomotion*, a work comprised of 781 plates depicting the anatomy of

motion of humans and animals in various stages of work, play, and rest, was published first in November 1887.

Muybridge's contributions to moving pictures indirectly reached the Pasternak brothers in Moscow via similar albums of European origin only in the first years of the twentieth century, but the effect of the images of deconstructed motion was no less powerful. Aleksandr describes how adept Boris was at rhythmically manipulating the books in such a way that the motion was perfectly unbroken, while Aleksandr himself struggled to keep the Austrian soldiers from moving in comically jerky fits and starts.[44]

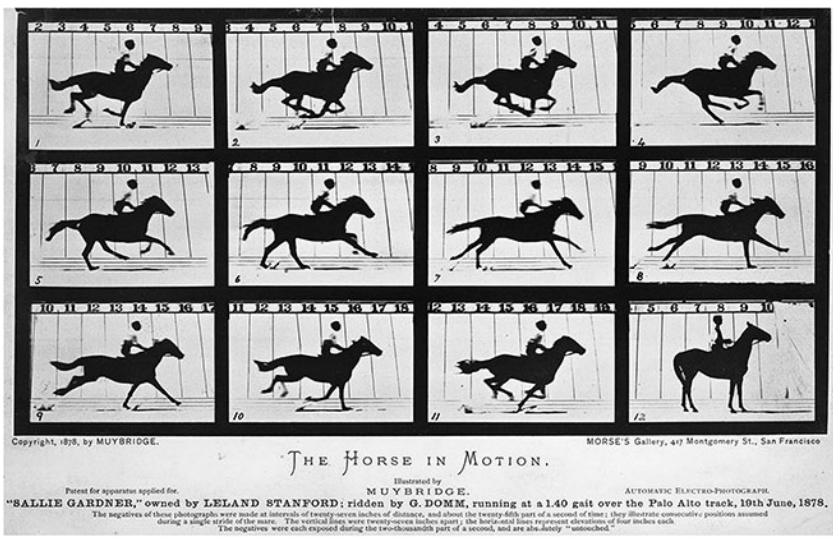

Copyright, 1878, by MUYBRIDGE.
MORSE'S Gallery, 417 Montgomery St., San Francisco
THE HORSE IN MOTION.
Illustrated by
MUYBRIDGE.
AUTOMATIC ELECTRO-PHOTOGRAPH.
"SALLIE GARDNER," owned by LELAND STANFORD; ridden by G. DOMM, running at a 1.40 gait over the Palo Alto track, 10th June, 1878.

Figure 1.6. The horse in motion. "Sallie Gardner," owned by Leland Stanford; running at a 1:40 gait over the Palo Alto track, June 19, 1878. Photograph by Eadweard Muybridge. Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, file LC-DIG-ppmsca-06607.

> Boris was determined to master the secret of the albums. We used to study individual photographs for hours, particularly amazed by the incredible pictures taken in mid-action. . . . Gradually we worked out that each photograph differed from the next in some imperceptible detail, and that if you skipped several pages the difference became obvious. In the end we came to the conclusion that everything in nature acted in the same way as we saw here; there was an uninterrupted chain of infinitesimal movements, a small number of which had been caught by the camera. Boris made this discovery, which had a truly overwhelming effect on us

> both. Later, it also helped us to imitate the early films we saw, for our younger sisters' entertainment; we too made those odd, jerky motions that drew us away from the action of nature, to its unnatural image on the screen.[45]

The process of studying the fine anatomical details of the photographic flip-book pages revealed to Pasternak photography's ability to capture in detail a single slice of a moment that, within the flow of time, is imperceptible to the human eye. Yet, at the same time, the dynamic movement of time is documented in an incomplete fashion, for the camera can only capture a fragment of time's infinite and uninterrupted chain of motion. Even early film is described here as an "unnatural image," plagued by similar omissions that lead to the fitful motion that created a barrier between the viewer and the illusion of a natural flow of time.

Despite this veiled criticism of early film, the chapter concludes by emphasizing the power and terror of documentary cinema. Gathering with other children to watch short newsreels at a crude makeshift "cinematograph," the Pasternak brothers watched footage of scenes from the battlefields of the Russo-Japanese War. Aleksandr acknowledges the stark difference between cinema produced with actors and documentary footage of war: "we were well aware that the men we saw fell not at a photographer's whim, but in earnest."[46] He concludes the piece with a reverent summation of film and its ability to transform the visual world, transport its viewer across time and space, and create a feeling of participating in something awe-inspiring: the visualization of the movement of the natural world. "What if everything twitched and jerked? It was still the movement of the immovable, and we accepted it as such; not as a travesty of that smooth, uninterrupted flow that is nature itself, but as its documentary proof and evident confirmation. Grateful and reverent, we left the little hall with a wonderful feeling of having participated in a world of visible miracles, a sensation so strong that this is what I remember now, while the pictures which summoned it to life have been utterly forgotten."[47]

These observations from his brother's memoirs find an echo in Pasternak's letter written in French to Jacqueline de Proyart in May 1959 about motion and stasis: "I loved the appearance of movement of every sort, phenomena of force and action, I loved to grasp and convey this world that was moved by universal turbulence. But the image of reality which consisted of all these movements and enclosed them, this 'entirety'

which one calls the 'world' or 'universe,' was not a [rigid] frame for me, something given and fixed."[48] What Pasternak articulates here, so many years after his earliest exposure to the relationship between time and photo-cinematic images, is his prevailing interest in using poetic writing to convey the beauty and vicissitudes of nature and human experience. Art works not to fix, contain or pin down the dynamic nature of the world, but rather to preserve it, to hold it in motion, to offer in visual form an evolving, ongoing moment.

Pasternak and Photography: Theory and Practice

Pasternak's collection of poems *My Sister Life*, written in the summer of 1917, is the volume of his works that perhaps most readily demonstrates the appeal of photographic aesthetics and the language of photography as creative tools for this poet. This is not surprising when we consider the role photography played in Pasternak's life during his formative years and at the time he was writing the poems for the collection *My Sister Life*. In an interview I conducted with Pasternak's son in May 2010, the late Evgenii Borisovich Pasternak explained that in his experience, his father did not share a particular passion for photography but would often assist his brother, who was an active amateur photographer and professional architect.[49] According to Evgenii Borisovich, his father was drawn to whatever technology was popular at any given time: photography in the 1910s, then film later, and so on.[50] Letters and memoirs from the first two decades of the twentieth century reveal that both Boris and Aleksandr Pasternak were directly engaged in photography-related activities at this time; not only did Pasternak's parents and siblings sit for formal photographs, but there was a camera in the family home. Furthermore, Pasternak and his family purchased a camera as a gift for a friend, and Aleksandr and other acquaintances actively took and developed photographs, often sending them in letters to friends and family. A close examination of the letters and diaries from the period before and during the composition of *My Sister Life* reveals key details about the formation of Boris Pasternak's thinking about photography.

In a letter to his parents on July 22, 1907, from Raiki (figure 1.7), a village in Moscow Oblast, where the Pasternak brothers vacationed with friends, Boris Pasternak writes of the rising popularity of photography among the members of the group and of his brother's burgeoning interest in the medium. In addition to the description of the boys' boating excursion on the Bear Lakes (Medvezh'i ozera), Boris takes special care to

include two photographs from the trip, seemingly as a way of competing with his brother's enthusiasm for all things photographic.

> I have a feeling that this letter will closely resemble Shura's [a nickname for Aleksandr] account, so I am changing the scenery. And so, take yourselves back (in time and space) to Raiki, to the time of the festivities marking the birth of Alya and Lyova Samoilov. I think that this pair of "*briutanki*" [a neologism from Brut Champagne] from these festivities are at the height of their vocation. In general, photography is flourishing in Raiki. Right now (for the third time), Shura is developing photographs. So far, he is failing utterly. But this "child of the sun" decided to print ten horrific dramas [napisat′ desiat′ skvernykh dram] and a nice eleventh one. What can be done? Frelandt is getting rich.[51]

The somewhat peculiar collocations in this passage reveal Pasternak's conflation of the language of photography with the language of theater; he uses the phrase "to write dramas" to refer to the process of printing photographs,

Figure 1.7. Leonid Pasternak (center) with sons Boris (left), Aleksandr (right), and daughters Josephine and Lydiia. Raiki Mansion, 1907. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.94.

and describes the enclosed photographs as *dekoratsii*, "scenery" or "set design" in the context of the theater. Invoking the process of "writing [a]

drama," alongside his characterization of Shura as a "child of the sun," is almost certainly a reference to Gorky's popular play *Deti solntsa* [*Children of the Sun*] (1905), used here with a playful nod to the notion of photography as "light-writing," or the "pencil of nature." The images he encloses in the letter (figures 1.8–1.9) are somewhat reminiscent of a theatrical stage, in which the company stands together on a dock, positioned as if they are part of a stage performance. The juxtaposition of the two images suggests a shift in the

Figure 1.8. Photograph from Bear Lakes, 1907. Courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archives.

Figure 1.9. Photograph from Bear Lakes, 1907. Courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archives.

action from dock to boat, while the main compositional element is repeated: a line of figures, perhaps performing dialogue from a scene. The theatricality of the photos and the accompanying description suggest a broader temporal space captured in the frame of the images. The snapshots present a world of activity, a performance that began before and ended only after the images were taken; the women who bookend the group on the pier—one bent over, and the other turned to the side—are images particularly evocative of motion in progress. At the same time, Pasternak seems to poke fun at the "staged" quality of the photographs, which further support the tension described earlier between the static, posed photographs, and a form of photography more capable of suggesting dynamic motion and action in progress.

Photography was also very much on the minds of Pasternak and his friends and family in 1916 when, in a letter dated March 11, 1916, sent from Vsevolodo-Vil'va to his parents in Moscow, Boris requests that Aleksandr attend to an important errand on his behalf. He was to purchase a good quality Kodak camera for his close friend Boris Zbarskii, who was to visit the Pasternaks in Moscow in the coming days.

> But I do have one errand, a very urgent one, and I would be extremely grateful to Shura if he could take care of it. Here it is: I'd like to get Zbarskii a gift—a camera—they don't have one and he's

planning to get one in Moscow.

> Papa, you still have 50 rubles of mine—not in securities, but in cash, I think. Please obtain for me a good Kodak camera for no more than 50 rubles (if it is possible to get a good one for that price), but not for less than 25–30 rubles.[52]

Pasternak's plan to gift the camera to Zbarskii was successful; a letter to Boris's parents from early April 1916 tells of Zbarskii's arrival to join Boris in Vsevolodo-Vil'va and his friend's tearful confession that meeting Leonid Osipovich and Rozaliia Isidorovna was "one of the most important events of his life" (figure 1.10). The letter goes on to say: "Yesterday we took a few photographs and developed them right away; they turned out very well; we'll print some up and send them to you."[53]

Two of the photos from that day in Vsevolodo-Vil'va are reproduced here (figures 1.11, 1.12). Figure 1.11 depicts Boris Pasternak at the piano. The second photo, a striking portrait of the young poet (figure 1.12), is sometimes attributed erroneously to Rodchenko and is reminiscent of that famous photographer's intense portraits and precise attention to light, shadow, and line patterns. As the excerpts from Pasternak's letters indicate, photography was a central part of daily and creative activities in Pasternak's world in the years leading up to the composition of *My Sister Life*.

Figure 1.10. Leonid Pasternak and Boris Zbarskii, Moscow, 1917. Photograph by Aleksandr Pasternak. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.164.

Figure 1.11. Photograph of Boris Pasternak at the piano, Vsevolodo-Vil'va, 1916. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, file 96063.3.151.

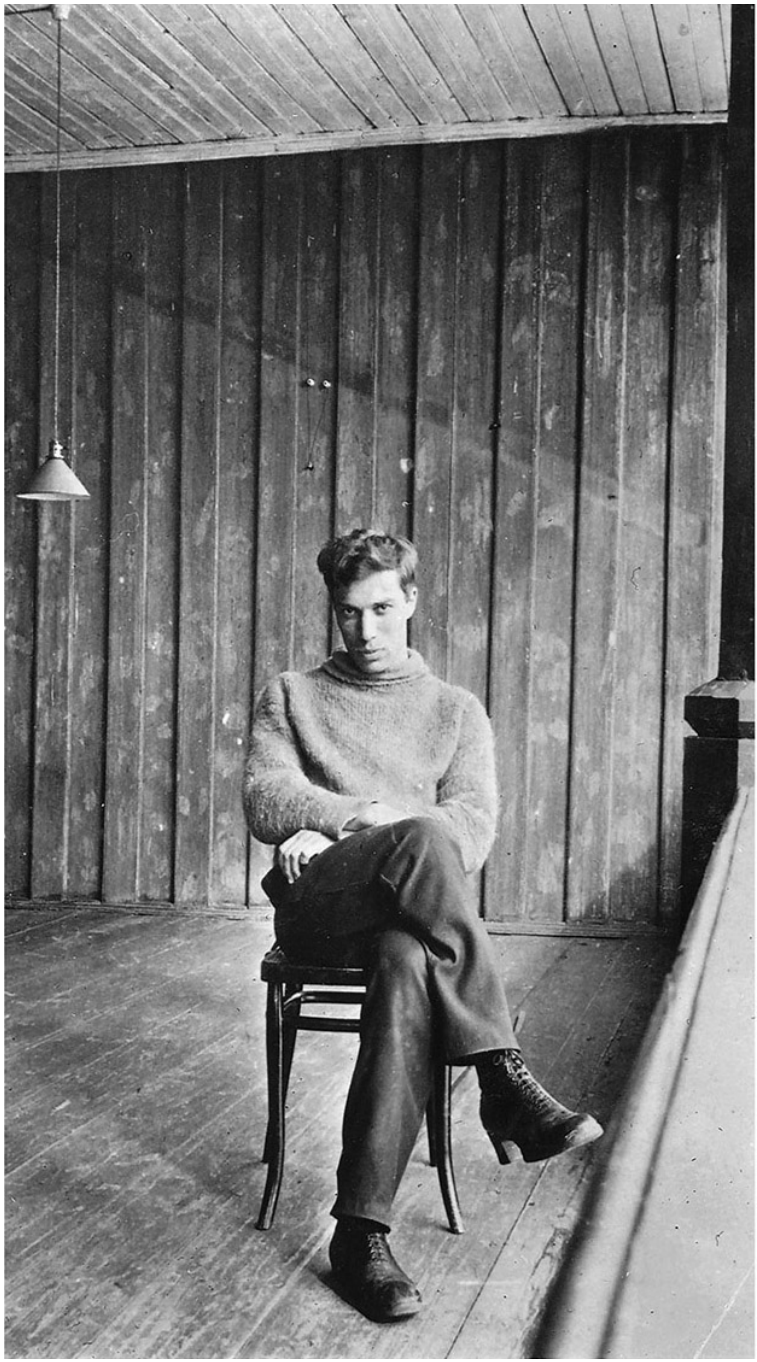


Figure 1.12. Photograph of Boris Pasternak, Vsevolodo-Vil'va, 1916. Image courtesy of Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford

University, file 96063.3.149.

An image printed from a photographic negative found in the Pasternak Family Archive further illustrates the presence of photography in Pasternak's immediate surroundings at the time he was coming into his own as a poet and composing *My Sister Life*. This previously unpublished photograph (figure 1.13) offers evidence of the exposure Pasternak would have had to photography and elucidates a possible source of inspiration for the kinds of

Figure 1.13. Aleksandr and Leonid Pasternak self-portrait in a mirror, Volkhonka Street studio, Moscow, c. 1915–21. Image courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archive.

framing and mirroring techniques that Pasternak incorporates in his poetic works around this time. The image depicts Aleksandr and Leonid Pasternak in the elder's studio on Volkhonka Street. Father and son, along with their camera, are reflected in a tall, rectangular mirror standing in the studio. This mirror is suggestive of the *triumo* of the poem "Mirror"

(Zerkalo) from *My Sister Life*. The portrait painted by Leonid Osipovich hanging on the far wall and reflected in the mirror along with the camera presents a kind of evolutionary line linking painting to the mechanically produced photographic image. Though the photograph is undated, Pasternak's grandson, Petr Pasternak, estimates—given Aleksandr's age in the photo and the history of the family's residence in the Volkhonka apartment—that it was taken sometime between 1915 and 1921, around the time Pasternak was composing *My Sister Life*.[54]

Writing the Photograph in My Sister Life

Pasternak's book of lyric poems *My Sister Life* was conceived in the summer of 1917 and was first published in Moscow in 1922. It is no accident that Tsvetaeva uses the word *svetopis'* in her essay "A Downpour of Light," (Svetovoi liven', Berlin, July 1922) to characterize this important early collection, the first of Pasternak's that she read. *Svetopis'* is the original Russian word for "photography," combining the Slavic roots for "light-writing" (*photo-graphia, pisat' svetom*, *svetopis'*). She writes: "By the way, on the nature of light in Pasternak's poetry: Photo-graphy [*Svetopis'*] —that's what I'd call it. A poet of lightness (others are, for instance, poets of darkness). Light. Eternal Courage. Light in space, light in movement, slashes of light, explosions of light—veritable banquets of light. It has flooded and overflowed. Not just from the sun, but with all that radiates—and for Pasternak everything gives off rays of light."[55] Although photography is perhaps not precisely what Tsvetaeva means when she uses *svetopis'* to characterize the writing of *My Sister Life*, as an amateur photographer herself she was undoubtedly aware of its extended lexical connotations.[56] The extent to which the use of *svetopis'* here does suggest photography makes it an apt characterization of the collection; *My Sister Life* includes poems built around images of flashbulbs, light-sensitizing solution, and animated photographic portraits. In the poems "Mirror," "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever" (Groza, momental'naia navek), and "The Substitute" (Zamestitel'nitsa) photographic imagery works to establish an enduring aesthetic principle for Pasternak, one that locates inspiration, emotion, and consciousness at points of tension between static and dynamic states of being.

Using photographic motifs in the poems of *My Sister Life* is not done with the goal of conjuring still images in a frame or album. As the memoirs of Aleksandr Pasternak suggest through the brothers' dissection of the photographic flip-books, all things in the natural world exist as "an

uninterrupted chain of infinitesimal movements, a small number of which [can be] caught by the camera." But if the goal of Pasternak's poetry is to capture the full range of dynamic motion of the natural world, then the goal of metaphorically involving photography is not an end-stage marked by a small number of encapsulated moments, printed and framed in nostalgic poses. Rather, Pasternak's early photo-poetics is one that is almost always in motion, paradoxically striving to capture and immortalize an experience, yet not proceeding to fix it in static form. For instance, there is the famous extended photography metaphor in "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever," in which the thunderstorm takes "a hundred blinding photographs of the night." Another example of this photographic dynamism is the snapshot of the beloved in "The Substitute" ("I live with your photograph, / the one that laughs"), which is animated in a frenzied whirlwind of activity; a third instance is the image of collodion, a light-sensitizing agent used in the wet-plate developing process, poured onto the mirror of perpetual motion in "Mirror."

To create in art is to immortalize, yet to halt time—using photography or art in general—would be to wrench the image from the flow of time, from the path of life. As Olga Hasty argues, in "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever," Pasternak is able to achieve a remarkable balance between using art and photographic motifs as transformative means of achieving immortality; yet he does not overstep the bounds of the real world, never going so far as to fix the moment and wrench it from the flow of natural time. The effect has far-reaching consequences; as Hasty writes, "To make the fleeting endure without arresting its capacity for continued unfolding is to interrelate change and permanence, becoming and being, and thus to obviate the conventional opposition of life and death."[57] Chukovskii observes that Pasternak harnesses poetic language to portray the world as the camera sees it—in infinitely precise detail, and with a sharpness of vision that strives to capture the world in ways that often elude the human eye: "His lyrics almost always reproduce the reality which, at that very second, appears before his eyes. It's as if he is taking instantaneous snapshots of it."[58] What distinguishes Pasternak's photo-poetics from those of other poets who enlist photographic language in their poetry is that, rather than focusing on tangible, printed photographs, Pasternak employs aspects of the photographic process and its technology in his poetic writing. Frozen images of the past are of secondary importance in Pasternak's artistic world; instead, his poetics concentrate on light, movement, and the creation of a new kind of vision, one that melds with

the natural world and serves to illuminate consciousness.

Гроза, моментальная навек

А затем прощалось лето
С полустанком. Снявши шапку,
Сто слепящих фотографий
Ночью снял на память гром.

Меркла кисть сирени. В это
Время он, нарвав охапку
Молний, с поля ими трафил
Озарить управский дом.

И когда по кровле зданья
Разлилась волна злорадства
И, как уголь по рисунку,
Грянул ливень всем плетнем,

Стал мигать обвал сознанья:
Вот, казалось, озарятся
Даже те углы рассудка,
Где теперь светло, как днем![59]

A Storm, Instantaneous Forever

And then summer bid farewell
To the station. Taking off its cap,
Thunder took as a souvenir
A hundred blinding photos of night.

A bunch of lilacs grew dim. At that
Moment the thunder, gathering an armful
Of lightning, attempted from the field
To illuminate the town hall.

And when a wave of gloating
Poured along the building's roof
And, like charcoal lines in a sketch,
A gate of rain crashed down,

The abyss of consciousness began to flash:
And so, it seemed, illumination

Would reach even those corners of the mind
Where it is now as light as day![60]

In the depiction of light in "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever," the interplay of illumination and photography operates in ways that resonate with aesthetic concerns of the larger world of Soviet art and media. We have the seemingly paradoxical nature of the lightning flashes; they are at once likened to the photographer's magnesium flashbulb and described as blinding photographs, that is, those that would seem to impair vision.[61] The way the lightning flashbulb cancels out vision here resonates with Angela Livingstone's claim elsewhere that Pasternak prefers "the potential superiority of the dynamic over the visual."[62] Given the power of an aggregate of photo-documentary evidence described by Rodchenko, we can argue that the multitude of lightning flashes likened to snapshots has a similar purpose in this poem. Instead of canceling out perception, the "hundred blinding photographs" represent an attempt to capture the experience of parting not simply as a single summary portrait but as a sum of many different views of the same scene, as a way of coming closer to portraying the true nature of the moment described in the lyric. Pasternak constructs a similar fleeting photo-optical image in another poem, "In the Forest" (V lesu), in which brightly beaming eyes create a similar flashblub effect from within:

Есть сон такой,—не спишь, а только снится,
Что жаждешь сна; что дремлет человек,
Которому сквозь сон палит ресницы
Два черных солнца, бьющих из-под век.[63]

There's this dream—you don't sleep, you only dream
That you thirst for sleep; and a person dozes,
While he sleeps his eyelashes are burned by
Two black suns, beaming under the eyelids.

The juxtaposition of presence and absence is also a central theme of "A Storm," and this tension is problematized and developed through the poem's photographic subtext. The work dramatizes the poet's farewell to the summer, set at a railway stop that, as Katherine O'Connor notes, is "a point of embarkation rather than of destination." O'Connor continues her analysis of the spatial and temporal dualities of the poem: "By making the summer itself the primary leavetaker in the poem, Pasternak manages to blend the imminent spatial demise of the locale, which is about to

disappear into the distance, with the imminent temporal demise of the season, both of which will continue to exist only in the poet's memory."[64] The photography metaphor established at the opening of the poem is part of the larger dichotomy of presence and absence that emerges from the paradox inherent in photography's relationship to time. In capturing an instant of visual experience on film, the moment is at once fixed in the form of an image (or many images, in this case), yet the moment in time when the photo is taken passes, not to be resurrected or reexperienced. This is the central paradox of photography's representation of time; the photograph as an artifact gives us the opportunity to return over and over again to a moment from the past, seen in the form of a still image, yet the moment in time itself cannot be revisited. This idea is encapsulated in another line of Pasternak's poetry, one that is not directly connected with photography, but which betrays the same ideas about time encapsulated in art:

> Мгновенье длился этот миг.
> Но он и вечность бы затмил.[65]
>
> The blink lasted but an instant.
> But it would darken for an eternity.

Hasty takes this argument about the link between photographic image and memory a step further. She posits that while the photograph can call forth a memory, the photographic image cannot be equated with memory. Hasty observes:

> There is no such thing as "a memory" in the sense of an image fixed with immutable photographic precision. Memory enables not the arrest of a fleeting moment (a metaphor realized by the technology of photography) but rather a potential for duration in which what is preserved remains in flux—affected both by forgetting and by the imagination and colored by preceding and subsequent events, by what triggers the recollection, by the various contexts in which the recollection takes place, and by the ever-new configurations into which the recollection is drawn.[66]

This is important for understanding the larger goal of Pasternak's photo-poetics: the use of the medium's technical characteristics in these early works establishes the primacy of the depiction of the ephemeral over the distorting effect of fixing a fleeting moment.[67]

The reference to photographic technology in this poem is challenged further by the juxtaposition of a different artistic mode: the image of the deluge of rain depicted in terms of a charcoal drawing.

> И, как уголь по рисунку,
> Грянул ливень всем плетнем
>
> And, like charcoal lines in a sketch,
> A gate of rain crashed down

To be sure, there are important contrasts at work in juxtaposing the instantaneous photographic process to the stroke-by-stroke metaphor linking rainfall to a charcoal drawing. Yet what is consistent in the correlating of the black-and-white photographs of a lightening-filled sky and the similarly two-toned charcoal sketch of rainfall is the way that each image—with its blend of natural forces and artistic medium—emphasizes the process of artistic creation over its product.

The hyperbolic nature of this blinding light in the first stanza of the poem returns in the final lines, as the flickering landslide of consciousness (*obval soznan'ia*) seems to illuminate "even those corners of reason/where it is now as bright as day!" (Vot, kazalos' ozariatsia / Dazhe te ugly rassudka / Gde teper' svetlo, kak dnem!). The aim here is not confined to the vision revealed by a printed photographic image.[68] Instead, photographic imagery is employed as a means of illuminating consciousness and creating the presence of a kind of hyper-visualization or hyper-illumination of the natural world and the space of human consciousness. The mundane surroundings of the railway stop take on a new form as they are photographed by the lightning; the illumination process is then focused on the inner recesses of the mind, resulting in a kind of visualization that goes beyond the bounds of the natural world.[69] In his writing on Benjamin and photography Eduardo Cadava also notes connections between consciousness, philosophy, and the historical origins of the photographic.

> In the ancient correspondence between photography and philosophy, the photograph, relayed by the trope of light, becomes a figure of knowledge as well as of nature, a solar language of cognition that gives the mind and the senses access to the invisible. What comes to light in the history of photography, in the history that is photography, is therefore the secret rapport between photography and philosophy. Both take their life from

> light, from a light that coincides with the conditions of possibility for clarity, reflection, speculation, and lucidity—that is, for knowledge in general. For Benjamin, the history of knowledge is a history of the vicissitudes of light. For him, there can be no philosophy without photography. As he writes in his *Passagen-Werk*, "knowledge comes only in flashes" (N 43 / GS 5:570), in a moment of simultaneous illumination and blindness.[70]

Later in Pasternak's life, illuminated consciousness via photographic technology is replaced by an even more powerful form of light—the light of God. In his lyric "August" (Avgust) it is no longer the photographer's flashbulb that enhances consciousness but the force of divine radiance of the Tabor Light (*Favorskii Svet*) of the Transfiguration (*Preobrazhenie Gospodne*):

> Обыкновенно свет без пламени
> Исходит в этот день с Фавора,
> И осень, ясная, как знаменье,
> К себе приковывает взоры.[71]
>
> Usually a light without flame
> Pours this day from Mount Tabor,
> And autumn, clear as an omen,
> Draws everyone's gazes.

In conveying visual experience and the interplay of consciousness and perception in his poetry, Pasternak uses photographic tropes as a way of isolating the experience of perceiving, capturing, and processing moments in time. In "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever," we find resistance to freezing a moment in time and a desire to instead illuminate experience in time and space. Late in his life, in a letter to Stephen Spender, Pasternak articulates the same principles found in his early engagement with photo-poetic writing. Pasternak eschews art's power to fix an image forever; instead, he favors the kind of capturing of a moment that preserves the dynamic properties of an object or experience. We find at once the pleasure of capturing an experience in a particular frame, yet preserving its authenticity by not pushing to fix the moment in a static state, allowing it instead to retain its dynamic properties:

> Composing music, prose, or poetry . . . the top pleasure consists in having hit the sense or taste of reality, in having been able, in

> having succeeded in rendering the *atmosphere of being*, the surrounding whole, the total environment, the frame, where the particular and depicted thing is having been plunged and floating.
>
> . . .
>
> To attain a true resemblance between the imitative efforts of art and the truly tasted and experienced order of life it would me not suffice [*sic*] to put my representation in a vivid instantaneous motion. I would pretend (metaphorically) to have seen nature and universe themselves not as a picture made or fastened on an immovable wall, but as a sort of painted canvas roof or curtain in the air, incessantly pulled and blown and flapped by something of an immaterial unknown and unknowable wind.[72]

The poet's goal of portraying nature and the universe as a "curtain in the air, incessantly pulled and blown and flapped by something of an immaterial unknown and unknowable wind" calls to mind another poem from the *My Sister Life* collection that uses photographic imagery to once again capture the dynamic motion of the natural world through the principles of photographic technology.[73] "Mirror," a poem that originally bore the title "I Myself " (Ia sam), serves to transfer the experience of seeing the world and, by extension, the self, into the realm of the aesthetics of the image. The mirror of this poem works just like a camera to create an image of the world outside. The lyric speaker signals the imaging of the natural world through a reference to collodion and the wet-plate photographic developing process. This characterization reinforces the idea that the reflection in the mirror, while indeed in motion, is only a representation, the Husserlian image-object, and not the thing itself.

The large rectangular mirror, the *triumo* at the center of "Mirror," captures in its reflection the dynamic motion of the world first inside, and later outside, the room.[74]

> В трюмо испаряется чашка какао,
> Качается тюль, и—прямой
> Дорожкою в сад, в бурелом и хаос
> К качелям бежит трюмо.[75]

> A cup of cocoa steams up the mirror,
> The lace curtain sways, and straight
> Along the garden path—into windfall and chaos—

The mirror runs to the swings.

"Mirror" has attracted much scholarly scrutiny, in part because it is a poem that illustrates well Pasternak's conception of his own creative process.[76] O'Connor, for example, examines the allegorical links between the mirror of the poem's title and the poet himself, characterizing the poem's subtext as "the relation between the poet, his art, and the world of nature which he reflects in his art."[77] Concerning the photographic motif embedded in stanza four of the poem, there has been a wide range of interpretations, few of which demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the photographic process to which Pasternak alludes. The poem's speaker in line 15 suggests that it seems as if collodion has been poured onto the mirror of perpetual motion that comprises the poem's central image.

Огромный сад тормошится в зале
В трюмо—и не бьет стекла!
Казалось бы, все коллодий залил,
С комода до шума в стволах.

Зеркальная все б, казалось, нахлынь
Непотным льдом облила,
Чтоб сук не горчил и сирень не пахла,—
Гипноза залить не могла.

The garden rampages, huge in the mirror—
And yet doesn't shatter the glass!
And everything seems collodion coated,
From dresser to sounds in the grass.

The mirrory tide has flooded, it seems,
The world with its ice and erased
The tart from the branch and scent from the tree—
But still couldn't dampen the trance.[78]

Collodion is the substance used in the wet-plate photography process, a technology with which Pasternak would have been intimately familiar, as evidenced from the descriptions of taking and developing photographs in Raiki with his brother and the box of Frelandt's glass plates. In the wet-plate photography process, a collodion solution was poured onto a glass plate and drained off (a method called "flowing the plate"). The plate was then put into a box, immersing it in liquid silver nitrate for several

minutes, which completed the process of sensitizing it to light. The plate could then be inserted into the camera. It is important to emphasize that collodion was used before the photograph was taken to sensitize the glass plate to light and make it possible for the image to transfer to the plate upon exposure to light.

The technical details of this process seem to be misread in some scholarly treatments of the poem. Jean Marie Shultz's 1983 article on the work recognizes that the collodion image signals a comparison of the mirror to a photograph of sorts, but Shultz misreads collodion's role in the photographic process, arguing first that the collodion "converts the hard surface of the mirror into a flowing liquid substance," which Shultz then relates to the poem's opening image of the "meandering steam" from the cup of cocoa that appears on the surface of the mirror. The problem with this reading is that pouring collodion on the mirror is only imagined by the poet ("so it seems" ["kazalos′ by"]); it does not actually transpire in the poem.[79] Instead, the metaphorical meditation on preparing the surface of the glass to become a photographic plate is designed to denote the sensitizing of the glass surface to light and, as Anna Ljunggren argues, to anticipate the transfer of the multidimensional experience of the natural world—in smell, taste, and hearing—into the flat world of images which, like a mirror, do not transmit sensory experience beyond the visual.[80] Shultz also writes that the mirror-as-photograph motif seems to "layer images on its flat surface," a reading that seems misdirected, since the whole point of the poem is a resistance of the static image in favor of the dynamic (mirror in motion, the reflected images cannot shatter the glass).[81] Finally, Shultz refers to collodion as a "chemical developer," which also betrays an insufficient understanding of how collodion works in the wet-plate photographic process; the chemical was used to prepare the plate, not as a fixative in the developing process. In this sense, even Zsolt's reading focuses perhaps too much on the fixing of an image, rather than the preparatory phase of sensitizing the plate to light. Zsolt argues: "The image of the world covered in collodion forces the reader to recall the fixing of reality that photography offers. With the help of collodion one can attempt to recreate lost connections, reconstitute the unity of the universe by 'fixing' motion or changes of any type: 'So the branch will not taste bitter.'"[82]

Boris Gasparov's interpretation of this poem in the context of his exploration of the poetics of everyday life in Pasternak reads a double meaning in the image of collodion. In his view, collodion calls to mind two

webs of meaning, one associated with illness and home remedies, and the other associated with photography. Gasparov explains that collodion was used as a topical protectant applied to the skin to treat small wounds and hold bandages in place. This reading of collodion in the medical realm interacts with similar sensory images in the poem that are associated with illness, such as the "smell of drowsy medicines" (zapakh sonnykh lekarstv), calling to mind, in Gasparov's convincing reading, images of "medicinal and sleep-inducing herbs." At the same time, Gasparov correctly reads collodion's function in photography as a "light-sensitizing coating." The implications of the layering of associations result in a hallucinatory blend of memory and associations: "Through this network of associative intertwining begin to emerge the contours of an image of a passing illness: there is the pained feeling of the abrasions, the sharp 'medicinal' smells, the 'hypnotic' effect of impressions and memories that flicker in one's consciousness during an illness."[83]

The multiple readings of the role of collodion in this poem can be clarified if considered in the context of Pasternak's broader thinking about photography. A focus on the tension between the photographic process and its product and the problem of balancing the ephemeral with the eternal also puts weight on the preparatory, light-sensitizing function of collodion as a transitional stage in the photographic process. Tempered with collodion, the mirror, like the photograph, engages only vision. The senses of taste and smell are eliminated (chtob suk ne gorchil i siren′ ne pakhla). Yet, unlike a fixed photographic image, the mirror preserves the motion of the world outside. Within this framework, made strange by contrasting the dynamic motion of the swinging mirrored reflection with the stillness of the anticipated photographic image, the lyric speaker finds it remarkable that the intense movement of the swinging world refracted in the mirror does not break the glass. The poem's final lines exclaim:

Огромный сад тормошится в зале,
Подносит к трюмо кулак,
Бежит на качели, ловит, салит,
Трясет—и не бьет стекла!

The garden rampages, huge in the mirror,
And raising a fist to the glass,
It catches the swing, tags it and shakes it—
And still doesn't shatter the glass![84]

An earlier poem by Pasternak that also makes reference to a glass-plate negative provides further context for this reading of "Mirror" and the image of collodion on a glass plate. Pasternak's first poem to refer to photography is his "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed" (Toska, beshenaia, beshenaia), written in 1916 and published in the second volume of Bobrov's *Tsentrifuga* literary almanac.[85] This complex and troubling lyric is characteristic of Pasternak's early Futurist writing with its irregular metrical structure, highly inexact rhyme, ungrammatical fragments, and a series of destabilizing metonymic transformations within the imagery of the poem. Catherine Ciepiela characterizes the central idea of the poem as an attempt to "capture and frame the dramatic, mobile representations of the hysteric."[86] Indeed, the lyric speaker of the poem is masked until the end, while the subject of the poem is an unhinged, highly volatile, and fully embodied *toska* (translated here as "anguish"). The poet's "anguish" at the opening of the poem jumps to life and shatters a window in the first lines, initiating the performance of a series of feminized, eroticized moves that engage violence and ecstasy, forced silence and hysterical cries.

Тоска, бешеная, бешеная,
Тоска в два-три прыжка
Достигает оконницы, завешенной
Обносками крестовика.
Тоска стекло вышибает
И мокрою куницею выносится
Туда, где плоскогорьем лунно-холмным
Леса ночные стонут
Враскачку, ртов не разжимая,
Изъеденные серною луной.

Anguish, crazed, crazed,
Anguish in two or three leaps
Reaches the window frame hung
With the castoffs of a garden spider.

Anguish breaks the window
And like a wet marten rushes
To where across the moon-hilled plateau
The night forests moan,
Swinging, without unclenching their mouths,

Eaten away by the sulfuric moon.[87]

As this "anguish" bounds through the world, she encounters a "thrusting branch" and "hoists a wail." As Ciepiela notes, the sexually symbolic act leaves behind "the mark of anguish" (kleimo toski) on the branch, while anguish herself begs the branch to remove a thorn from her paw (molit s poslednego suka / Vynut′ iz lapki zanozu). At this point, near the end of the poem, the lyric speaker's voice enters for the first time. The shattered glass of the opening scene takes on the form of this metaphorical thorn, and the poet's narrator states, "I hope they'll pull it out." The final lines call on the glassworker (stekol′shchik) to insert in the window frame the "caustically ingrained photograph / of my soul with a woman's name in the [secular, everyday] world."[88]

Надеюсь, ее вынут. Тогда, в дыру
Амбразуры—стекольщик—вставь ее,
Души моей, с именем женским в миру
Едко въевшуюся фотографию.

I hope they'll pull it out. Then, into the opening
In the embrasure—glazier—insert it,
The caustically ingrained photograph
Of my soul with a woman's name in the world.[89]

As Ciepiela observes, the poem comes full circle and the hysterical, grammatically feminine *toska* of the opening is equated with the poet's soul, which bears a "woman's name in the world."[90] The dynamic motion of the poet's anguish is captured in a scarred aesthetic object, and the image transferred to the glass plate of the allegorical photograph replaces the poet's reflection in the window glass. Furthermore, the idea of a photographic image rendered in glass calls to mind the glass-plate negatives used in the wet-plate collodion process that is evoked in "Mirror." Pasternak's rendering of the image of his "soul with a feminine name in the world" as a photographic negative—with its reversing of black and white—further emphasizes the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine in this lyric.

The use of a photographic motif in "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed" sets the stage for some of the photo-poetic elements in *My Sister Life*, especially in the way that the insertion of the photograph into the window pane conjures the image of a glass-plate negative, linking it to the collodion moment in "Mirror." Yet this early experimental lyric—a text that

Pasternak never anthologized or republished during his lifetime—also operates in opposition to the later photographic poems of *My Sister Life*, in which the language of photographic technology merges with attempts to capture the ephemeral while preserving the dynamic properties of the natural world. In *My Sister Life* we find that the process of taking photographs combines with the poet's attempt to render his particular mode of visual perception of the dynamic properties of the natural world. "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed" involves a similar degree of ecstatic energy as "Mirror," but unleashes this energy in an aggressive, even violent, form. "Anguish" culminates not in a dynamic rendering of the soul in motion, but a raw, fixed image, forced into the frame of the broken window. Comparing this image to another feminized photographic image from *My Sister Life*, found in the poem "The Substitute," further advances the idea that Pasternak continued to engage the tension between the static and the dynamic throughout this collection of poems.

In the opening lines of "The Substitute," a photographic snapshot of the beloved is animated in a dramatic whirlwind of activity.

> Я живу с твоей карточкой, с той, что хохочет,
> У которой суставы в запястьях хрустят,
> Той, что пальцы ломает и бросить не хочет,
> У которой гостят и гостят и грустят.[91]

> I live with your picture, the one that laughs
> The one whose wrists are snapping
> The one who won't stop wringing her hands
> The one with the guests and ghosts and the grief.[92]

This poem was written about Elena Vinograd, Pasternak's beloved in the summer of 1917, and was probably inspired by an actual series of photographs of Vinograd that were taken around the time the poem was written (two of the images are Figures 1.14 and 1.15).[93] In "The Substitute," the still photograph (kartochka) at the poem's opening is animated, plays the piano,

Figure 1.14. Elena A. Vinograd, 1917. Image courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archive.

Figure 1.15. Elena A. Vinograd, 1917. Image courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archive.

whirls in a frenzied dance and eventually merges with the lyric speaker in a rhythmic gallop that has the effect of fully unifying the spirit of the poet and his beloved. This poem can be read as a kind of antidote to "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed." In "Anguish," the feminine soul of the lyric speaker breaks out into a wild and violent world, only to be captured and fixed in the form of the photographic artifact at the poem's close. In "The

Substitute," it is the opposite: the image of the feminine soul, inspired by a series of photographic portraits, is released from the confines of the static image.

We have seen thus far how the creative work of Boris Pasternak represents a complex and multilayered example of how photography's pervasive influence on the way we see the modern world enters into poetic space. Pasternak's use of the conceptual tools and metaphor of photography draws attention to particular aesthetic concerns that remain with the poet throughout his creative life. Such concerns include the artist's paradox of reconciling mortality and the eternal; a desire to see and portray all that is visible, yet which the human eye may not perceive; the connection between light, perception, and consciousness; and the poet's theory of artistic creation and history. Beginning with the poems of *My Sister Life*, we find a profound tension in Pasternak's engagement with photography that pits the power of the embodied photographic image against the technological, aesthetically dis-embodied process of seeing the world as if through the lens of a camera. In examining the three poems of *My Sister Life* that hinge on photographic motifs or otherwise draw on imagery and metonymic language that suggests the photographic process, we observed the way Pasternak transforms his poetry into an apparatus that strives to capture—and therefore, immortalize—the fluid, fleeting moment.

Symbol, Philosophy, and Photography

> Photography is the process of rendering observation self-conscious.
>
> —John Berger, "Understanding a Photograph" (2013)

In Pasternak's philosophical writings on artistic inspiration, he often employs words associated with observation, visuality, and image-making: "[Art] is more one-sided than people think. It cannot be directed at will, wherever you wish, like a telescope. Focused upon reality, which is being displaced by feeling, art is a record of this displacement. It copies it from nature. In what way is nature displaced? Details gain in sharpness, losing independence of meaning. Each one could be replaced by another. Any one of them is precious. Any one, chosen at random, will serve as witness of the state that envelops the whole of transposed reality."[94] Pasternak's interest lies primarily in the process of depicting ephemeral experiences, not the resulting piece of art in tangible form. As he notes, it is a "record

of . . . displacement" of reality by emotion. A remark in *Okhrannaia gramota* clarifies that it is not the material side of art that is his primary concern, but rather its genesis (or "phenomenon" [iavlen′e]), its development through "being known" (poznan′e), and its embodiment in the "movement of the allegory itself " (dvizhen′e samogo inoskazan′ia): "For fear of misunderstandings, I will repeat: I am speaking not of the material content of art, not about the ways it can be filled, but about the meaning of it as a phenomenon, its place in life. Individual images are visual *per se*, and based on the analogy of light. The individual words of art, like all concepts, live by being known. But the word of art as a whole, which does not submit to quotation, consists in the movement of the allegory itself, and this word speaks symbolically of power."[95]

In her article "Symbol and Strength: Goethean Thought in Doctor Zhivago" [Simvol i sila. Getevskaia mysl′ v *Doktore Zhivago*], Olga Sedakova examines these notions of strength, symbol, and light as part of an exploration of affinities she finds across works by Pasternak, Goethe, Tolstoy, and Proust. Her article explores these writers' various methods of artistic seeing, their process of perception, and their relationship to the notion of symbol.[96] Sedakova's work is multilayered and complex, but some of its key points help to establish the larger artistic and philosophical parameters that will subsequently allow us to further contextualize Pasternak's interest in photography within the larger space of his poetics.

Sedakova set out to examine connections between Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* and Goethe's *Doctor Faust*, but the central idea of her article evolved from a microstudy of characters and their authors to a larger scholarly project that circumscribes authors such as Pasternak, Goethe, Tolstoy, and Marcel Proust in a single artistic conception. According to Sedakova, these authors each ascribed to a particular mode of cognition, one that holds as its central unit the concept of the symbol. Symbolism here refers to a specific definition, characterized by Pasternak, for example, in his famous statement uttered by Vediniapin in *Doktor Zhivago*, "Life is symbolic because it is meaningful" (Zhizn′ simvolichna, potomu chto ona znachitel′na).[97] A similar sentiment articulated in Goethe's *Faust* —one that takes the flow of time into account—"Alles Vergängliche / ist nur ein Gleichniss" ("All that is transitory is but a likeness") was translated by Pasternak as "All that is flowing is but a symbol, a comparison" (Vse bystrotechnoe—simvol, sravnen′e).[98] This symbolism, which Sedakova translates as a kind of life force, or *Zhizn′* (Life), derives from a common artistic quest to *perceive* and *relate* perceptual experience,

what Goethe called the artist's attempt to "see the visible" (videt' vidimoe).[99] In the following passage, Sedakova describes this understanding of *Zhizn'* as a life force born from within the poet. Quoting a passage from *Doktor Zhivago*, she focuses on how this force emerges and is illuminated, like the mineral phosphorous, through the poetic word. As Pasternak described it: "Not he, but something more general than he, sobbed and wept in him with tender and bright words, which shone like phosphorus in the darkness. And together with his weeping soul, he himself wept."[100] This quotation resonates with descriptions of poetic inspiration provided by the branch of philosophy known as phenomenology, which Robert Sokolowski defines as "the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience. . . . [It is] reason's self-discovery in the presence of intelligible objects."[101] It is to the question of the interaction of phenomenological thinking and photographic aesthetics that we now turn.

In addition to evidence from correspondence and other life writing that touches on Pasternak's observation of the power and problems of the photographic image, I also suggest here that Pasternak's study of philosophy—especially his exposure to Husserlian phenomenology (and Bergson's concept of *durée*)—play a role in the development of the poet's relationship with the photographic. Pasternak's study of philosophy drew his attention to problems of perception and consciousness, nature's interaction with the human spirit, and other questions that are reflected in his poetic writing, in particular in the poems from *My Sister Life* that invoke photography.[102]

In his seminal article "K kharakteristike rannego Pasternaka" (Characterizing Early Pasternak), Lazar Fleishman identifies a key mode of thinking informing Pasternak's early writing: Edmund Husserl's foundational work on phenomenology.[103] In particular, Husserl's notion of intentionality, that consciousness is always consciousness of something, is of central importance for Pasternak's creative world. In phenomenological thought, the Kantian division between subject and object of contemplation is removed, such that the object of consciousness possesses the ability to make itself known to the conscious subject, the perceiver. As such, objects in the world reveal themselves: they make themselves known to, seen, heard, smelled, and so on by the subject, the perceiver, who must also possess similar intentionality in perceiving the object's essence or being.

Fleishman views this principle of the "givenness" or "directionality"

(dannost′) of the object of perception to the perceiving subject as the basis of something Andrei Sinyavsky identified in his 1965 foreword to the first scholarly edition of Pasternak's poetry printed in the USSR. Sinyavskii notes that the lyric "I" in the poet's works often seems to recede into the background, while things in nature—presumably those things being perceived by the lyric "I"—appear to become one with the poet and take over or merge with his narrative point of view.

> [Pasternak] rarely speaks about himself or from his own point of view, striving to remove or mask his lyric "I." When you read his poems you instantly encounter an illusion that there is no author; he doesn't even exist as a narrator or witness to what is being seen and described. It is Nature that tells its own story. . . . If Mayakovsky and Tsvetaeva use their own voice to speak for the whole world, Pasternak prefers that the whole world speak on his behalf, instead of him. . . . Nature itself appears in the role of the central lyric hero. And the poet is basically nowhere to be found. He is not a side view of the unfolding panorama; rather he is its double, actually *becoming* the sea or the forest.[104]

In a passage from a 1914 letter to his parents, Pasternak speaks to the idea that the perceptual powers of the artist are not externally dictated. Instead, artistic creation follows from a process of observation that combines the artist's individual lens as the means of mediating perception with internally held, yet tangible, embodied forms representative of abstract notions such as time and consciousness.

> The field of vision should not be some sort of inevitably dictated raw material, for which the eye is innocent and bears no responsibility. Forms should follow from a particular quality of each artist's attention, just as conclusions follow from the thoughts of other people. And on the other hand, all sensations of abstract things, such as consciousness of time, the past, consciousness of spatial patterns and so forth, essentially all *thoughts* of the artist should *reside* within him in the form of crudely strange deposits—heavy, dark, something one can touch and feel (*telesnoi i osiazatel′noi*).[105]

Christopher Barnes notes that Pasternak's *Safe Conduct* clearly echoes Husserl's thinking on the nature of vision and the multiple levels on which we perceive a work of art: "In *Safe Conduct*, too, there is an element

of Husserl in Pasternak's appreciation of 'what it is like for the visible object when it begins to be seen,' and in his description of the painter's 'identity with this pictorial element, and it becomes impossible to tell which of the three is more actively manifest upon the canvas and for whose benefit: the painter, the painting, or the thing painted.'"[106]

The scholar of photography and phenomenology Chan-Fai Cheung traces how phenomenology as a discipline has treated photography from Husserl to Heidegger, Sartre, Hubert Damisch, and others. Important for our study of Pasternak, Cheung concludes: "To let the subject matter show itself from the manifold of the natural lifeworld as well as to give the subject matter an order and meaning embedded in the composition is the work of photographic seeing. Things and events that are seen photographically as they appear through the reduction of camera programs can be manifested in ten thousand ways. As such, photographs are indeed *phenomena* in the phenomenological sense."[107] A phenomenological approach to photographic seeing allows for some degree of agency in the photographed subject to "show itself," to appear in the form of an image-object, which is what we have seen in the examples from *My Sister Life* where Pasternak employs the lexicon of photography to connect the natural world with the world of human emotion.[108]

Photography in the Historical Epic: Between My Sister Life and Doctor Zhivago

In turning to a discussion of photographic motifs in Pasternak's historically themed works of the 1920s, it is useful to keep in mind the shift identified in these earlier works, from the violent rendering of the soul in the fixed photographic frame in "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed" to imagery in the poems of *My Sister Life* that emphasizes the photographic process over product, thereby enabling the lyric to express continuous dynamic motion. As Pasternak develops his particular form of historical poetics, photographic motifs return in a form distinct from what we find in *My Sister Life*. In two works from this period, the historical *poema* (narrative, or epic poem) *The Year 1905* (Deviat'sot piatyi god) and the novel in verse *Spektorskii*, Pasternak further solidifies the tension between photographic image-object and photography's process and potential. In the first instance, in the "Students" (Studenty) section of *The Year 1905*, Pasternak employs an ominous photographic metaphor to depict the scene of a student massacre. In the second work, the central eponymous

figure, Sergei Spektorskii, enters the work in a way that recalls the dynamic photographic imagery of *My Sister Life*. The final chapter of the novel features Spektorskii's encounter with a photographic artifact, a snapshot of the hero that conjures themes of abandoned goals, false hopes, and a generation lost to emigration.

The Year 1905

Pasternak's epic poem *The Year 1905*, written in 1925–26 and dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the revolutionary events of that fateful year, further problematizes the interplay of visual and verbal representation in Pasternak's poetic consciousness. This work, written early in Pasternak's sojourn from the lyric to the epic, fell short of expectations for the genre of epic poetry, despite its large historical themes. As Larissa Rudova argues, "despite his desire to represent the revolutionary epoch on a grandiose scale, Pasternak is unable to overcome his lyrical drive completely and give his long poems a strong and convincing historic-political ring."[109] Pasternak felt the work to be part of a larger epidemic of mediocrity that had infected his generation of Soviet writers.[110] Nonetheless, the *poema* was well received by Maksim Gorky and others in the Soviet literary establishment; Sviatopolk-Mirskii called the publication of the volume containing *The Year 1905* and *Lieutenant Schmidt* "a significant literary event, perhaps the most important of the past few years."[111] The work appeared to fulfill the poet's hopes of creating a tribute to the history of the Russian Revolution and simultaneously improve his difficult financial circumstances.[112]

In composing the work, Pasternak drew on his childhood memories of the events of 1905 in Moscow. At the same time, the poet spent a good deal of time—much more than he originally intended—scouring news clippings, books, and archival materials related to those events to convey scenes from the revolution in what he envisioned would be an almost documentary fashion.[113] Pasternak noted this documentary emphasis in a survey of writers in 1926, "it is not a *poema*, but simply a chronicle of 1905 in verse form."[114] He made it clear in the same survey that while he took pleasure in the work, he had struggled to move from lyric poetry, with its emphasis on individual forms of expression, to the outwardly oriented, "objective" genre of the epic: "The work is very satisfying for me and is opening new horizons. In our time, the lyric has almost ceased to exist, and here I must be objective and move from the lyric to the epos. I now no longer feel my former disappointment."[115]

Scholars of this work, most notably Konstantin Polivanov, have focused on the documentary sources that enabled the poet to present with a supposedly high degree of verisimilitude the scenes featured in the work.[116] The *poema* opens with a section titled "Fathers," which Rudova describes as intended "to pay homage to the radical intelligentsia that gave the initial impulse to the revolutionary movement in Russia." Part two of the work, "Childhood," is the most personal of the fragmented portraits of moments from the 1905 revolution, with its references to boyhood revelry, Alexander Scriabin, and holiday celebrations, although the central episode of this work is the depiction of the Bloody Sunday massacre. Other sections take up equally explosive events from the year in question: conflicts between police and urban workers in "Peasants and Workmen" ("Muzhiki i fabrichnye"); the sailors' revolt on the battleship *Potemkin* in "Mutiny at Sea" ("Morskoi miatezh"), an impressionistic scene that shares cinematic qualities with Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, which was being filmed at the time Pasternak was writing *The Year 1905*.[117] The text includes a scene of violent student protests that broke out in the wake of the funeral of assassinated revolutionary Nikolai Bauman, and a final episode "Moscow in December" ("Moskva v dekabre") that illustrates a clash between police and demonstrating workers in December 1905, culminating in the surrender of revolutionary forces at Krasnaia Presnia in the final scene.

In her treatment of the influence of modernist visual aesthetics in *The Year 1905*, Ludmila Schleyfer Lavine convincingly argues that it is aesthetic perception that comprises the central organizing principle of the work, rather than historical or documentary verisimilitude. As Lavine notes, "the action of viewing or witnessing is written into the text"; for example, in the opening images in "Fathers," there is a list of "visual hallmarks of the previous generation," including "daguerreotypes" and "students in pince-nez" and the "obesdushennyi kaleidoskop" ("a lifeless kaleidoscope"), optical devices that characterize the static visual culture of previous generations.[118] Visual culture is also central to the autobiographical speaker's recollections in "Childhood," a section that features such artistic references as "Vkhutemas," "father's studio," and "canvases." Lavine further suggests that the goal of much of this work is to provide a contrasting animation of the world to convey a new kind of historical thinking. As she puts it: "The speaker sees the times of his 'fathers' as 'obezdushennyi kaleidoskop' ('a lifeless kaleidoscope'), in which historical details are gathered in one place and hung side by side. Once the speaker's generation is 'born' ('my rodimsia'), we come across a

visual description that lays bare precisely the device of infusing the static nature of a *peizazh* with movement." Lavine also notes the way the new generation establishes a dynamic visual mode that arises from the visually mediated, photography-inspired dynamism found in the poems of *My Sister Life*. For example, we see the sudden shift from stillness to animacy through visual cues in the *poema*, as young people are said to "randomly animate / An unfamiliar sunset / And at the sight of the pipes / We will shudder" (My odukhotvorim naugad / Neprivychnyi zakat, / I pri zrelishche trub / Potriasemsia). Lavine further argues that it is precisely this aesthetic of dynamic motion that is at the heart of this work: "In Pasternak's *poema* the background and foreground merge, and waver as a single unit, between stillness and animation."[119] Lavine offers compelling readings of the cinematic quality of the *Potemkin* section, as well as the parallels between other sections of the work and paintings on similar historical themes by Valentin Serov.

In treating the photographic motifs found in the "Students" section of the work, Lavine notes the introduction of "a sequence of snap-shot images of corpses in suspended animation."[120] The shift in this text from photographs figured as a means of encapsulating the dynamism of the world to photographic motifs that freeze, still, truncate motion is an important development in Pasternak's engagement with the poetic possibilities of photographic language and imagery. In depicting a mass killing, Pasternak shifts his expressive mode in a somewhat uncharacteristic way, from a poetics of life and light to a depiction of death using the frozen photographic moment. Photography in this work, unlike the photographic poems of *My Sister Life*, is invoked in the context of death, and Pasternak draws on the medium's potential for still, static, frozen representational forms. Connections between photography and death are as old as the medium itself, and Pasternak's "Students" is hardly the only example where the photo-camera is weaponized as an instrument of death. For example, similar use of a photographic motif to denote death by gunfire figures in Nabokov's 1928 poem "The Execution" (Rasstrel) about the murder of the poet Nikolai Gumilev.[121] Just as the moment the shots are fired is likened to a photographer's magnesium flashbulb in Nabokov's text, Pasternak's "Students" also views death in photographic terms.

А на площади группа.
Завеянный тьмой Ломоносов.
Лужи теплого вара.

Курящийся кровью мороз.
Трупы в позах полета.
Шуршащие складки заноса.
Снято снегом,
Проявлено
Вечностью, разом, вразброс.[122]

On the square is a group.
Lomonosov wrapped in fog.
Puddles of warm pitch.
Steam rising from warm blood on frost.
Bodies posed in flight.
Rustling of folds in the snowdrift.
Photographed by snow
Developed
By eternity, all at once, at random.

In this section of *The Year 1905*, Pasternak likens the image of dead bodies in the snow to developed photographs marking the stillness and finality of death. This is done in contrast to the use of photographic motifs to capture the dynamic life forces that we find in the photo-poems of *My Sister Life*. Consistent across Pasternak's use of photographic motifs is the paradoxical rendering of time as both eternal and punctuated; in the case of this section of "Students" the bodies seem to hover, posed in flight, at once flying and at rest. They are bathed in blood, "photographed by the snow" and "developed by eternity," such that a fleeting form of precipitation (snow) can act as the camera, seizing the bodies in their deathly poses, while "eternity" acts as developing solution, fixing the images of death for all time. The random nature of the scattered snapshots ("vrazbros") are connected to earlier observations about the fragmented and incomplete nature of viewing life as a series of photographic snapshots, such as in Pasternak's experiments on photographic flip-books and his poetic rendering of lightning as capturing "a thousand blinding photographs of the night." Reflecting back on the rigid, framed photographic image that closes the poem "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed," we see affinities in the way Pasternak uses the photographic in sealing his anguish there and in "Students." In each case, the photographic image marks a kind of death; in one case, it is the metaphorical fixing of the anguished soul decaying in the frame of the photographic image; in the second case the photographic pays tribute to

the stiff bodies of the fallen revolutionaries on the blood-stained Moscow snowbanks.

Dual Photographic Modes in Spektorskii

The historical epics of the 1920s mark a shift in Pasternak's poetic writing from a practice focused on depictions of nature and individual experience toward a heightened consciousness of historical time. The frame of his narrative moves beyond the individualism of the lyric, striving instead to engage in the work of documenting and preserving historical experience on a larger scale as witness to the events of his times. The shift in the use of photographic motifs to document historical events in *The Year 1905* continues as Pasternak completes work on his novel in verse, *Spektorskii*, a project that he began on an optimistic note in 1926, but struggled to finish, bringing it to a close only in 1930. What makes *Spektorskii* a key text in the discussion of Pasternak's photo-poetics is that the work provides a compelling demonstration of the two opposing forces at work in the poet's conception of the power and limits of photography. *Spektorskii* exemplifies a dynamic photo-poetics of motion that strives to capture an experience in a state of transition and evolution. At the same time, the work concludes with a symbolic denouement triggered by an encounter with a printed photographic artifact, which represents the opposite of the poetics of capturing the ephemeral moment.

Pasternak conceived of this novel in verse as a descendant of Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*.[123] The narrators of *Spektorskii* and *Eugene Onegin* are each an individual personally acquainted with their work's eponymous hero. However, while Pushkin fashions his narrator after himself, in Pasternak's work it is the main character, Sergei Spektorskii, who is a version of the author. The central love story of the work—the relationship between Spektorskii and the poet Marina Il'ina that lies at the heart of the tale—mirrors and re-imagines Pasternak's relationship with Tsvetaeva.[124]

Fleishman has noted the use of optical language in the opening passages of the work and its relationship to the central hero's surname, which is derived from a word that resonates with the language of optics and the physics of light: *spektr* (*spectrum*).[125] Anna Sergeeva-Kliatis goes further in her commentary on the etymology and origin of this name, citing a surname Pasternak may have encountered in his studies of philosophy: Evgenii Vasil'evich Spektorskii (1875–1951), a law scholar and author of a two-volume work on the application of theoretical physics to

solving sociological problems.[126] The name Spektorskii is significant beyond its potential connections with a particular historical figure because of the broader etymological underpinnings of the name. The root of the name, *spektr* (spectrum), according to Fasmer's etymological dictionary and Eric Partridge's comparable work in English, derives from the Latin *specere*, "to see."[127] It is evident that vision, perception, and optics are a part of the make-up of the character's name, but the significance of this optical subject extends beyond the name's etymology.

In considering the photo-poetic elements of *Spektorskii*, the "optical language" and "visual effects" identified by Fleishman are more specifically grounded in the rhetoric of photography, and the use of such imagery and language is part of the larger continuum of photo-poetic modes of expression in Pasternak's creative world. The employment of photographic language and imagery in *Spektorskii* exists as a kind of allegory of the two opposing views of the possibilities available thanks to photography that developed throughout the poet's early work: the contrast between photographic technology—and its ability to capture dynamic motion and change—and the stasis of the printed photographic image.

The sections of *Spektorskii* that related to photography were part of revisions Pasternak made to the text when he finally brought the work to completion in 1929–30. At this time he added a ninth chapter of the work, as well as a new introductory section, and it is in these sections we find the photographic motifs.[128] This method is one that David Bethea has identified in his work on *Doctor Zhivago* as a key element of Pasternak's creative approach to depicting the trajectory of history in fictional form. It is perhaps unsurprising that Bethea too turns to a photographic metaphor to explain Pasternak's approach to history:

> For Pasternak, history is endowed with meaning and its forward movement acquires purpose at those privileged moments when genuine change and newness are apparent. The future emerges from the camera obscura of the present as a kind of photographic negative to be later "developed." It is not in the photographer's power to change the images on the paper, only to bring them more clearly into focus. The fact that the future *already* exists in the present and at historical turning-points becomes visible in a kind of "double exposure" suggests the spatial condition of coincidence or parallax [. . .].[129]

In the opening stanzas of *Spektorskii*, the author-narrator—like Pushkin's narrator in *Eugene Onegin*—explains his motivations for writing the present novel in verse about a somewhat unsavory character, the "superfluous man" of the post-revolutionary era, Sergei Spektorskii. The narrator's introduction of his hero reveals the first instance in this work of language related to photography:

Я стал писать Спекторского в слепом
Повиновеньи силе объектива.

Я б за героя не дал ничего
И рассуждать о нем не скоро б начал,
Но я писал про короб лучевой,
В котором он передо мной маячил.

Про мглу в мерцаньи плошки погребной,
Которой ошибают прозы дебри,
Когда нам ставит волосы копной
Известье о неведомом шедевре.

Про то, как ночью, от норы к норе,
Дрожа, протягиваются в далекость
Зонты косых московских фонарей
С тоской дождя, попавшею в их фокус.[130]

I started writing Spektorskii in blind
Obedience to the strength of the (camera) lens.

I wouldn't give anything for this hero,
And I wouldn't have begun to meditate on him
But I was writing about the light-ray box,
In which he loomed before me.

About the gloom in the blinking cellar lamp
Which hits the thickets of prose,
When news of a unknown masterpiece
Makes our shock of hair stand on end.

About how, at night, from burrow to burrow,
Trembling, into the distance the umbrellas
Of slanting Moscow street lamps reach out

With the longing of rain falling in their focus.

The merging of photographic imagery with the poetic writing is indicated first by the use of the phrases "power of the camera lens" (sil[a] ob″ektiva) and the somewhat more idiosyncratic "light-ray box" (korob luchevoi) in the description of the genesis of the main character of the work. These col-locations call to mind the passages from *Safe Conduct*—the autobiographical prose work that Pasternak was composing around the same time (1928–31)—in which he describes the forces "ray of light" (luch svetovoi) and "ray of power" (luch silovoi).

It is worth considering here how light's function in photography—as the catalyst for chemical processes that fix an image on light-sensitive paper—relates to the metaphors of light, vision, and perception within Pasternak's understanding of the creative process. Light-writing ("photo-graphic") principles are at the heart of his philosophy articulated in *Safe Conduct* on the concepts of power and symbol, and their relationship to light, illumination, and creativity. In distinguishing science from art, Pasternak argues that, in science, light operates as a catalyst for perception by illuminating the natural world "in a section of a shaft of light"; art, on the other hand, is moved to depict life "at the moment when the ray of power *is passing through it*." Pasternak explains,

> If I had the knowledge, ability and leisure and were now to decide to write a creative aesthetics, I would construct it upon two concepts—the concepts of power and of symbol. I would show that, as distinct from science, which takes nature in the section of a shaft of light, art is interested in life at the moment when the ray of power *is passing through it*. I would take the concept of power in the same very broad sense in which it is taken by theoretical physics, with the sole difference that it would be a question not of the principle of power but of its voice, its presence. I would explain that, in the context of self-awareness, power is called feeling.[131]

Through the process of wrestling with other prose works, the narrator is inspired to create the figure of Spektorskii, who comes to him through the medium of what he calls a "light-ray box" (*korob luchevoi*), a metaphorical apparatus that captures images using rays of light. Pasternak may have had in mind any number of photographic devices, from the camera obscura to the magic lantern, or the photo-camera itself.

It is clear, in any case, that this optical lens (the camera's *ob″ektiv*) is the creative device that refracts the poet's vision of his hero. This vision is then captured in the light-ray box and developed in the dim, flickering light of the cellar room, just as the rain outside the poet's window falls into another ray of light, the "focus" of the streetlamps. Pasternak describes the genesis of Spektorskii the character in clearly photo-poetic terms, combined with additional layers of meaning related to the power of light and the power of symbol resonating from his work in *Safe Conduct*. And as with earlier photo-poetic encounters in Pasternak, the emphasis is on the *process* of capturing a moment, without interrupting the flow of time. In this case, the moment in question is the metafictional instant that conjures the central character of the work.[132]

Fleishman notes the importance of optical language in this passage. He argues that by surrounding the introduction of the hero with language that draws on the visual realm, Pasternak is able to highlight a certain "ambivalence" inherent in the protagonist's surname, in a way that resonates with a scene at the end of the work, in which a visual image of the hero reemerges in the form of an old photograph. Fleishman writes:

> So the central hero is surrounded by "optical" terminology and this motivates the play on visual effects. . . . This very "strength of the camera lens" [*sila ob″ektiva*] leads to the episode in the plot involving the photograph in Chapter 9, which completes the story of Spektorskii's relationship with Maria Il′ina. The semantics of the main character's name combine the mechanism (the camera lens [*ob″ektiv*]) and its result (the snapshot [*snimok*]). This "ambiguity" gets layered onto the passage in the introduction about the author's intentions for working on the novel.[133]

Fleishman's observation is important and deserves a more thorough analysis than it is afforded in his study of *Spektorskii*, for it provides further evidence of Pasternak's distinction between the way photographic technology allows for the figuring of a dynamic process and his concerns about the aborted printed image. The insertion of photo-poetic language and motifs into late revisions of *Spektorskii* reveals Pasternak's continued interest in the medium well into the 1920s. More importantly, the bookending of Spektorskii's story with photographic imagery demonstrates the medium's evolution as a trope that extends Pasternak's use of visual-temporal nuances into his more mature writing. As Rudova argues, Spektorskii is the "ancestor of Iurii Zhivago," in his

reflection of "the internal human drama of the displaced creative individual in a ruthless age."[134] The treatment of the photographic image and photographic seeing continues to resonate in Pasternak's eventual prose novel.

Spektorskii's encounter with his own photographic portrait in chapter nine symbolizes the tragic spiral of dissolution experienced by both the work's author and hero.

Ему какие-то совали снимки.
Событья дня не шли из головы.
Он что-то отвечал и слышал в дымке:
«Да вы взгляните только. Это вы?

Нескромность? Обронили из альбома.
Опомнитесь: кому из нас на дню
Не строил рок подобного ж: любому
Подсунул не знакомых, так родню».

Мело, мело.[135] Метель костры лизала,
Пигмеев сбив гигантски у огня.
Я жил тогда у курского вокзала
И тут-то наконец его нагнал.[136]

Someone thrust some photos at him.
Today's events didn't leave his mind.
He answered something and heard [as if] in a haze:
"But just take a look at this. Is that you?

Immodesty? They fell out of the album.
Come on! for whom among us, several times a day,
Didn't fate set up things like that:
it gave us relatives, if not friends."

The snow kept falling. The storm licked at the bonfires [on street corners],
Having brought pigmies together gigantically near the fire.
I lived at that time near the Kursk station
And finally caught up to him [Spektorksii] here.

Pasternak originally conceived *Spektorskii* as a celebration of the revolution, but over time the novel devolved into a work that expressed

the harsh loss of individuality and the way that time "rises against man and gets ahead of him."[137] This notion of time's effects on man, echoed much later by Joseph Brodsky,[138] is undoubtedly symbolized in the reemergence late in the work of Spektorskii's photograph from a time that he would never be able to recover or return to, neither temporally nor culturally.

Late Photo-Poetics beyond the Camera Lens: Doctor Zhivago and "Singular Days"

The photography-inspired aesthetic tools employed across Pasternak's early lyrics and in his historical *poemas* are also present on a structural level in his late works, including the novel *Doctor Zhivago* (1957) and his 1959 "Singular Days," the final poem in his final cycle, *When Skies Clear*. Descriptions of photographs infrequently appear in *Doctor Zhivago*, but the tension between fixity and fluidity is an essential part of the construction of certain macro elements of the novel.[139] For instance, the set of poems that closes the novel serves as an artistic "fixing" of the experiences of the book's eponymous hero, whereas the prose text of *Doctor Zhivago* positions the events within a more or less linear flow of natural time. This is particularly true in cases where the poems emerge directly from moments that the characters themselves experience within the flow of the prose novel.[140] In essence, the novel represents the "life" out of which the poems emerge. The Zhivago poems, in turn, render these experiences in a condensed form that is preserved as a kind of album of experiences that are framed, and illuminated, in poetic form.

Descriptions of photographs play a minimal role in the novel overall, whereas vision and optics function as a central theme and creative device in the novel. This suggests that while Pasternak's creative priorities had evolved by this time, traces of his earlier experimentation with photographically mediated forms of expression are still present on some level as an aesthetic concern. Evidence of the persistence of visual modes is present in the fact that Pasternak gives his protagonist, Yuri (Yura) Zhivago, a medical research specialization in ophthalmology: "That winter Yura was writing a scientific paper on the nervous elements of the retina in competition for a university gold medal. Though Yura would be graduating as a generalist, he knew the eye with the thoroughness of a future oculist. This interest in the physiology of vision spoke for other sides of Yura's nature—his creative gifts and his reflections on the essence of the artistic image and the structure of the logical idea."[141]

Throughout the novel, vision, light, and illumination are tropes accompanied by a clear emotional or spiritual dimension that goes far beyond their function as a means of objective visual perception. In chapter 2, the heroine, Lara, laments that she is fated to "see everything," something that causes her pain.[142] Later, after the antagonist Komorovsky kisses her against her will, she is stripped of this power of ubiquitous vision; she sits before her reflection in the mirror and "s[ees] nothing."[143] Yuri Zhivago, meditating on the nature of consciousness in chapter 3 employs highly visual descriptors to define consciousness in terms that are reminiscent of the illuminated "landslide of consciousness" (*obval soznan'ia*) in "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever" as well as of Tsvetaeva's early characterization of Pasternak's poetry as a kind of "light-writing" (*svetopis'*): "Consciousness is a light directed outwards, consciousness lights the way before us so that we don't stumble. Consciousness is the lit headlights at the front of a moving locomotive. Turn their light inwards and there will be a catastrophe."[144]

Many other moments in the novel concretize the tension between fluidity and fixity that is characteristic of Pasternak's photo-poetic writing. For example, Lara is rendered in the pages of the novel and the lines of the poetry as a maximally ephemeral image that symbolically represents the dynamic spirit of the revolution.[145] In a scene from chapter 5, Lara left the town of Zabushino, where she and Yuri have been stationed at a hospital. Yuri and Mademoiselle Fleury hear a knock on the door during a stormy night, and the two wonder if it might be Lara. Even after it turns out that it is not, they feel certain that a trace of her remained there, like a "watermark" (*vodianoi znak*).[146]

> They had been certain that they would open the front door and the woman they knew so well would come in, wet to the skin and freezing, and they would bombard her with questions while she shook herself off. And then, having changed her clothes, she would tell them about her countless misadventures, smoothing her hair and laughing. They were so certain of it that, when they locked the door, the traces of their certainty remained by the corner of the house outside, in the form of the woman's watermark or image, which continued to appear to them from around the turning.[147]

This passage describing the shade of Lara exquisitely illustrates Pasternak's ability to merge presence and absence and at once to capture

a fleeting moment of human experience while allowing it simultaneously to develop within a natural temporal framework. A similar principle is at work in an early scene in which Nika Dudorov, still a child, likens himself to God; he wills the tree standing before him to cease all motion and stand completely still, frozen. Miraculously, he is able to achieve this, thereby exposing a key aspect of Pasternakian photo-poetics; in this Faustian moment, creative power is achieved through having living motion come to a halt within the flow of natural time.

> "How good it is in this world!" he thought. "But why does it always come out so painful? God exists, of course. But if He exists, then He —is me. I'm going to order it," he thought, glancing at an aspen all seized with trembling from bottom to top (its wet, shimmering leaves seemed cut from tin), "I'm going to command it," and, in an insane exceeding of his strength, he did not whisper but with all his being, with all his flesh and blood, desired and thought: "Be still!" and the tree at once obediently froze in immobility. Nika laughed for joy and ran off to swim in the river.[148]

The reader recognizes that the tree does not actually stand still, except in Nika's imagination, yet the author renders the scene completely without irony.[149] This attempt to fix the motion of the natural world in static form, especially if the frozen moment is only an illusion, is in line with the kind of photo-poetic imagery we find in poems such as "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever" and "Mirror."

Photography is not mentioned in these scenes from the novel, but they nevertheless demonstrate the central photo-poetic principle in Pasternak's work: the merging of an instantaneous, ephemeral moment with continually evolving time is the definitive feature of the heroes' mutual passions. Furthermore, this notion of an emotionally charged experience in which a single moment can endure is the key to Pasternak's late poem "Singular Days," and represents its link to the aesthetic characteristics of Pasternak's photo-poetic writing.[150]

Bergson and Perception in "Singular Days"

Pasternak's late lyric poem "Singular Days" can be read as an extension of the photo-poetic principles present in his earlier works. Despite no mention of photography in the poem, this is a text so firmly grounded in philosophies of time that developed alongside photography that its

composition seems inextricably tied to the age of photography. "Singular Days" was included in Pasternak's final collection of poems *When Skies Clear* (Kogda razguliaetsia) (1956–59) and published posthumously in the 1961 *Selected Work* (Izbrannoe) and in the 1965 collected volume *Lyric and Narratives Poems* (Stikhotvoreniia i poemy). The last completed poetic text Pasternak wrote, this poem centers on images of nature in motion and at rest, in a period of seasonal transition, and takes as its central theme the enduring power of love across time. With a clarity of imagery that differs substantially from the poet's early verses, "Singular Days" holds within its lines a trace of the core elements defining a long-developing poetics of photography in Pasternak's oeuvre. In "Singular Days," we can sense the remnants of earlier uses of photographic aesthetics to emphasize Pasternak's poetics of dynamic motion. Present here too is the tension photography allows between the lasting stillness of the artistic text and Pasternak's particular way of preserving dynamism within the lines of a poetic text. The photo-poetics that underpin this text can be most clearly seen when we consider this poem's temporal framing, which is closely connected to the concept of *durée* first theorized in 1889 by Henri Bergson (1859–1941) and this philosopher's writings that link perception to photographic metaphors.[151]

Scholars have noted the importance of Bergson's durée in Pasternak's conception of time.[152] Durée, often called "real time" or "true duration" in English-language scholarship, is a concept that unifies the human experience of time and memory. As Rudova notes, it is durée that allows us to make sense of Pasternak's layering of different conceptual forms of time. "Real time [durée], just like pure memory, is indivisible and, unlike scientific time which can be divided into equal measurable segments, it is heterogeneous. In durée, therefore, each moment contains within it the stream of unrepeatable moments of the past. It is only this kind of time that can 'measure' the constant flux of perceptions of the world as becoming, and their interaction with consciousness."[153] In explaining the appeal of Bergson's durée for Pasternak, Rudova notes that durée allows for a mobile and fluid experience of time and memory, a concept that we can link to Pasternak's habit of resisting ekphrastic writing about the still photograph in favor of capturing an ever-evolving moment of experience. Berson's conception of durée allows for a notion of time that permits continuous renewal, an ever-advancing coming-into-being, and an opening to the dynamic interactions of time, human vision, and consciousness.

> Bergson's treatment of the nature of perception of reality is the most important aspect. Bergson points to the fact that reality, even though external, is given immediately to the mind. What is projected, then, is not the thing in a frozen state of existence, but the thing in its state of becoming, of constant change. We can understand reality only if we admit the mobility of the real, and stop constructing fixed concepts of it. Fixed concepts are incompatible with our consciousness, because in it perceptions of the present exist in their intermingling with past images collected by memory; past images may even take the place of the present.[154]

The photo-poetic elements that lie at the heart of "Singular Days," a text devoted to similar conceptions of time, vision, and the fixity and flow of memory as in a poem like "A Storm, Instantaneous Forever," have evolved significantly from their original presentation in the form of flashbulb lightning and other camera imagery that we see in Pasternak's early lyrics. The core of Pasternak's poetic vision of the power of the camera lens remains palpable, even in a text in which there is no overt mention of snapshots, fixing solutions, or photographic artifacts.

Much of the critical treatment of Pasternak's "Singular Days" views the lyric as conveying warmth and peace, a text that "bathed the cycle in the warm light of happy reconcilement."[155] Dmitrii Bykov, by contrast, finds the mode of the full collection, even amid detailed descriptions of the natural landscape, to be overwhelmingly one of anxiety and alarm about the future. In his reading of "Singular Days," in his 2016 biography of Pasternak, Bykov senses in the lines a particular unease; the ebb and flow of life appears to have come to a standstill, and the answer to the question of which way the balance will tip is elusive.

> This book is nothing if not troubling and full of uncertain predilections. It is not accidental that the landscape is almost always dark and dreary; it uses landscape only because Pasternak has always seen in nature the signs of impending change, and he consults with the natural world in order to understand the shifting winds and the secret rumblings taking place in the atmosphere. Social life has fallen into a kind of stagnation, the thaw has sputtered to a stop and Pasternak turns to the wind, the rain, the snow and asks them: what's next? By all appearances: nothing good. The natural world is distressed, the snow tries to hide a shameful secret, in the forest it's all bad weather. The world

is hanging in the balance—which way will the scales tip?[156]

Although Bykov's reading is a good deal more pessimistic than this contemplative lyric perhaps warrants, one thing is certain: the characterization of time in this poem should truly give us pause. On the temporal plane, the poem repeatedly juxtaposes durational time with stasis in a way that seems paradoxical in the natural world. For example, consider the seemingly oxymoronic character of "Singular Days" in light of the fact that the plural "days" is characterized in the opening stanzas not only as "singular," "unique," "the only one" (edinstvennyi) but also because each day is subsequently described at once as "unique," "inimitable" (nepovtorim) and yet it "repeated anew countless times" (povtorialsia vnov' bez scheta).

Dozorets describes two key principles defining Pasternak's poetic world: 1) a kind of bifurcation or double vision (*razdvoenie*) associated with concepts, words, and images in his works, and 2) a joining or connecting of dissimilar, distant, or paradoxical concepts. In terms of the representation of time in the collection *When Skies Clear*, time (and space) takes on a variety of forms. Dozorets contends that "time moves unceasingly, and even a moment can stretch on to eternity. But time can do more than just stop; it can also materialize. Time is limitless, but it is also finite and fleeting. Space, like time, is unlimited and endless . . . but it also can be confined to particular borders and frames: it has form."[157] The process of creating and viewing photographs involves the same kind of manipulation of time that we find in Pasternak's poem and throughout his final book of verse. Photographs halt time, creating a fixed image of a unique moment, one to which we can never return in chronological time. At the same time, it is a moment that we can revisit (and mechanically reproduce) in its tangible form as a photographic print and through the evolving memories it engenders. The moment in time figured in the image is immortalized, held indefinitely in the form it took during that precise moment when the shutter clicked. In Pasternak's late collection of lyrics, memory functions as an archive or catalog of images, and each moment recalled serves as a unique snapshot placed among an aggregate of similar, yet distinct, images.

Such a poetics is consistent with Bergson's influential theory of perception, which is linked to photographic aesthetics and photography's particular relationship to time. Bergson writes about the nature of human perception, "to perceive consists in condensing enormous periods of an infinitely diluted existence into a few more differentiated moments of an

intenser life, and in thus summing up a long history. To perceive means to immobilize."[158] Bergson's theory of perception as a collection of immobilized moments of distilled existence is remarkably similar to what the speaker of "Singular Days" tells us about the collection of days and experiences he has gathered up. The poem's second stanza describes a series of memory-images (tselaia ikh chereda), forming little by little (Sostavilas' malo-pomalu) as a series of moments brought about by the appearance of time coming to a standstill (kogda / Nam kazhetsia, chto vremia stalo).[159]

As with other photographic moments in Pasternak's works, the poetic act of bringing time to a standstill through the recollection of a weighted moment is only an illusion, an appearance. It only "seems" (kazhetsia) as if time has halted, just as the photographic image only *seems* to freeze and fix a moment in time.

Bergson's writing on the nature of being further echoes this temporal framing of remembered experience and also links it to photo-poetics: "We take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality, and, as these are characteristic of the reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back of the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic of this becoming itself."[160] Pasternak's poetry is known for creating striking points of interaction between the forces of nature and human actors. Throughout "Singular Days," stages of the speaker's life and memories from the past are described in terms of nature's cycles, in particular the character of the shifting length of day associated with the winter solstice (*solntsevorot*, *solntsestoianie*). The poem's metaphorical structures and the metonymy that substitutes natural forces for human action and experience are signaled by collocations and phrases that bring together unusual or paradoxical actors and actions, for example such striking personifications of the wintry scene as "*i solntse greet-sia na l'dine*" (And the sun warms itself on the ice flow), and "*poteet ot tepla skvoreshni*" (The bird houses perspire from the heat). But what conjoins the metonymy of nature and human action with the poetics of photography is the gathering up of these moments, these snapshots, of living beings' experiences over the course of a lifetime.

The key moment in the poem"Singular Days" that allows us to read the text in terms of the photographic is the well-known phrase from the closing lines, "And a day lasts longer than a century" (I dol'she veka dlitsia den').[161] A defining characteristic of the photographic image is its ability to extend a single moment in time, immortalizing it, allowing it to extend

far into the future. If we conceive of the poem's speaker's archive of the solstice days from his memory as photographic snapshots we gain a fuller understanding of how it is that a single day can last longer than a century. This combination of memory of inimitable moments repeatedly returning to the lyric speaker can be read in photographic terms and related to Bergsonian durée by way of Stella Baraklianou's linking of durée and the photographic mechanism. "It is the photographic frame that creates the illusion of arrest or a stop in the indivisible notion of a fluid time (*durée)*. Bergson's concept of *durée* is the condition *par excellence* of 'the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present' (Cariou 1999, 99–117). This is the temporality of the photographic frame: time turns back, folds in on itself, whilst incessantly open to its further potentiality of immanence. It allows an opening up to an active-reflexive state of being."[162] Motion and stasis merge once again in Pasternak's poem, as the sleepy hands remain still on the face of the clock. The memory of this day—like an image in a photograph—extends in an infinite pause (I dol′she veka dlitsia den′), while time is held in a continual, unending embrace (I ne konchaetsia ob″iat′e).[163] So much of the lexical and semantic trajectory of the poem is oriented toward a lengthening of time, a focus on its extension (*dlitel′nost′*), yet the image of the clock face holds time in an unending embrace:

И полусонным стрелкам лень
Ворочаться на циферблате,
И дольше века длится день,
И не кончается объятье.[164]

And half-sleepy clock-hands are too lazy
To turn about the clockface,
And a day lasts longer than a century,
And the embrace is never-ending.

The evolution of Pasternak's photo-poetics comes full circle in this poem. In his first futurist experimental lyric to invoke a photograph, "Anguish, Crazed, Crazed," the printed photograph stands as a metaphor for immobilizing the feminine by means of a violent form of fixing and framing. In much of his subsequent early poetry photographic motifs represent the process of capturing dynamic motion. In the poems of *My Sister Life* the use of photographic imagery works to achieve Krieger's ekphrastic ideal of balancing motion and stasis in poetry. The printed

photograph returns as an artifact in *Spektorskii* in which the dynamic and static potential of the photographic image is invoked for contrasting purposes. Finally, in "Singular Days," a work that contains no direct reference to photography, the tension between fixity and flow is palpable in the temporal qualities encapsulated by the lyric's meditation on a lifetime of ongoing moments that is clearly in harmony with Bergson's theories of time and perception.

Chapter 2

Through the Lens of Loss

Tsvetaeva's Elegiac Photo-Poetics

We now turn to the creative world of Marina Tsvetaeva (1892–1941), a poet whose early life has much in common with Pasternak's. Both grew up in Moscow. Their mothers were pianists, and their fathers were active in the high culture world of the visual arts. Pasternak's father was a painter and illustrator; Tsvetaeva's father founded the Alexander III Museum of Fine Arts. Tsvetaeva's life path diverged after the Russian Civil War in 1922 when she and her husband, Sergei Efron, a White Army officer (and later NKVD recruit), emigrated abroad with their daughter Ariadna; their younger daughter, Irina, had died in 1920 during a terrible famine. Tsvetaeva would live in increasing poverty in Berlin, Prague, and the Paris suburbs, returning to the Soviet Union in 1939. Following the arrest of her husband and daughter, Tsvetaeva and her son Georgii, who had been born in France, lived in increasingly dire circumstances. With no opportunity to write or publish, Tsvetaeva committed suicide in 1941 in Yelabuga, a small city where she had been evacuated earlier that year. Her works represent some of the most brilliant in all of world literature of the twentieth century. As a poet who actively wrote of her disinterest in, even disdain for, the visual world, Tsvetaeva nevertheless was a passionate amateur photographer during her time in France in the 1930s.

The twentieth century witnessed the creation of many literary masterpieces in which printed photographs are incorporated into the fabric of a written text that transcends their conventional role as

illustrations. Perhaps most notable among these are André Breton's *Nadja* (1928), Vladimir Nabokov's *Speak, Memory* (1967), and works by W. G. Sebald, such as *The Emigrants* (1996) and *Austerlitz* (2001). In these hybrid genres, combining novel and memoir, the full integration of text and photographic image serves to engage problems of historical documentation and human memory, to emphasize the works' elegiac themes, and to raise complex questions about the relative objectivity of both first-person narratives and photographic snapshots. In each of these texts the use of photographic material is part of a public performance and is a carefully crafted literary device. The authors archive, select, and caption these images, weaving them into the frameworks of their narratives, reinforcing (or distorting) biographical memory through carefully constructed juxtapositions of text and photographic image.[1]

More difficult to grasp is the extent to which photography in the modern age shaped literary texts in places where photographs do not serve as illustrations or where photography is not the obvious subject of the work. The poetry of Marina Tsvetaeva serves as a compelling example of an unspoken underlying influence of photography on literary texts.[2] Nowhere in her corpus of poetry do we find the words "photograph," "photography," "photographer," "snapshot," or "flashbulb," and yet Tsvetaeva's encounters with photography shaped her poetic writing—her elegiac poetry in particular—in important ways.[3]

The intersection of photography and poetry for Tsvetaeva consistently occurs at the crossroads of life and death. In each encounter I examine, a photograph inspires poetic writing because the picture offers a means to bridge the divide between presence and absence, between the world of the living and the world beyond. The images come to the poet primarily as the stilled gestures or artifacts of individuals who have already departed—or are soon to depart—the world of the living. Photographs offer Tsvetaeva an alternative path to what Helen Vendler calls the "vertical addressee" of the lyric.[4] Indeed, one of the defining themes in Tsvetaeva's poetic world is the search for a way to connect with individuals—other poetic souls—as well as with geographical and historical spaces, from which she is separated by impossible distances. This is a central part of Tsvetaeva's poetic persona and one that is key to understanding her relationship with photography. Tsvetaeva employs language, poetry, and the space of a photograph to bridge the divide between herself and the people and places she cannot access in the physical world.

In her essay memorializing Rainer Maria Rilke, titled "Your Death"

(Tvoia smert′), Tsvetaeva offers a revealing account of how the photograph functions as a form of elegy.

> Doesn't everyone who remains know secretly that the priest, the undertaker, the photographer—is just a pretext for our hands, which are itching for something to do, our endorsed and sanitized "I am! [*esm′*!]" our complete consent to live. We cling not to the deceased, but to the undertaker! In our haste to photograph the dead there is less of a desire to preserve this person than there is to replace him—the living features—with a snapshot (the agony is alive: it is the memory of him), than certainties that sooner or later we'll forget. The photographic print is our written pledge in oblivion. To preserve? No, to bury! A marking of borders. A thrashing. To adjust something, give it a push.[5]

The photographer here performs a role similar to that of the priest and the undertaker; the act of preserving, mourning, and delineating the space left behind by the dead is, in the end, a means for us, the living, to declare our own intention to live on and not be forgotten.

Photography and the Poetics of Mourning

In February 1935, Tsvetaeva sent a letter from Paris, where she was living in emigration, to her longtime friend and correspondent in Prague, Anna Teskova.[6] Included in the letter was a single black-and-white photograph, on the back of which Tsvetaeva penned the following inscription: "A portion of N. Gronskii's room. A small cabinet for books—among them are my books as well. . . . We photographed his whole room this way—in sections."[7] The photograph was taken by Tsvetaeva in early December 1934, approximately two weeks after twenty-five-year-old Nikolai Pavlovich Gronskii had died after falling under a subway car in the Paris Metro. Gronskii was an aspiring poet whom Tsvetaeva had befriended, mentored, and corresponded with in the late 1920s.[8] Several years after their correspondence had ceased, news of Gronskii's sudden death came as a terrible shock to the elder poet, a sorrow "pure and sharp like a diamond," as she wrote to Teskova.[9] In the wake of this tragedy, Tsvetaeva made several efforts to memorialize Gronskii and his artistic contributions to émigré Russian poetry. In the two versions of the review tribute she wrote—"A Posthumous Gift" (Posmertnyi podarok) and "The Poet-Mountaineer" (Poet-al′pinist)—Tsvetaeva argued that Gronskii

possessed a rare and previously unrecognized poetic gift. But Tsvetaeva's most significant elegiac offering to Gronskii came in a cycle of poems titled *Tombstone* (Nadgrobie). *Tombstone*, like Tsvetaeva's famous elegy to Rilke, *A New Year's Greeting* (Novogodnee), features a search for the spirit of the deceased poet and attempts to commune with him beyond the grave. The extent to which her photographic study of Gronskii's apartment was related to her poetic tribute in *Tombstone* is one of the central questions addressed in this chapter.

What we will find in examining Tsvetaeva's encounters with photography is that photographs give rise to poetry in places where the images the poet encounters represent a palpable form of personal loss. Investigating the underlying connections between photographs and poetic texts in her creative works reveals an affinity with something that modern theorists of photography—Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, Giorgio Agamben, and others—have noted time and again: the intimate relationship between photography and death. Such conceptual links were embodied in the Victorian-era practice of photographing the deceased, particularly infants and young children, as a way to retain a tangible memento and mitigating a painful loss.[10] Beyond the literal practice of photographing the dead, thinkers also described the way that photographs function as "an imperious sign of [one's] future death."[11] Barthes writes, "By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future . . . I shudder . . . *over a catastrophe which has already occurred*. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe."[12] Barthes's personal writings in *Camera Lucida* resonate with Susan Sontag's seminal work *On Photography*, which also draws attention to the photograph as a harbinger of death. Sontag writes, "Photography is an elegiac art, a twilight art. Most subjects photographed are, just by virtue of being photographed, touched with pathos. . . . All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt."[13] Elsewhere Sontag describes the indexical nature of the photograph as "a trace, something stenciled directly off the real."[14] She takes this notion further to draw an additional link between photography and death when she likens the photographic image to a death mask, a comparison also made elsewhere by André Bazin and Jean-Luc Nancy.[15] The photograph's link to a death mask is something Tsvetaeva also grappled with, as she and Nikolai Gronskii's mother, the sculptor Natalia Gronskaia, turned to

different expressive modes to mourn his death.

Benjamin's various writings on the aura of photography also suggest that the medium is intrinsically linked with death.[16] Benjamin defines the aura as "the apparition of a distance"; thus, the photograph's aura preserves a trace of something that has been lost (in time or in death), since viewing a photograph reveals a tension between presence and absence.[17] In describing David Octavius Hill's photograph of a Newhaven fishwife, for instance, Benjamin notes that in the subject's gaze "something strange remains . . ., something that is not to be silenced, something demanding the name of the person who had lived then, who even now is still real and will never entirely perish into art."[18] The pho tograph's physical existence as an artifact of something that once was makes it an object of enduring presence, despite the fact that the precise moment of the subject's gaze cannot be resurrected. The image's exigency —the demand for the name of the photographed subject, for an accompanying narrative—is what links the world of the living with that of the deceased.[19]

Tsvetaeva and the Visual World

In scholarship and in her self-description, Tsvetaeva has been characterized as a poet of keen aural sensibilities, one known for her striking use of sound play and paronomasia and for the verbal music of her syntactically complex verse. The visual world, by contrast, has been thought to be of secondary importance to her, leading scholars such as Victoria Schweitzer, in her seminal biography of the poet, to state that Tsvetaeva was "indifferent to the visual arts."[20] The role of the visual arts in Tsvetaeva's creative world has been, until fairly recently, largely neglected, and not entirely without reason.[21] In her writings, Tsvetaeva insists on the distinction between vision and hearing, and it is clear that her stated loyalties reside firmly with aural ways of knowing: "In general, of all the notorious five senses I know only one: hearing. As for the rest—it is as if they didn't exist and—it scarcely matters if they do!"[22] In response to a literary-biographical survey Pasternak sent to her in early April 1926, Tsvetaeva indicates once again that the visual arts are of little concern to her.[23] "Favorite things in the world: music, nature, poetry, solitude. Completely indifferent to: the general public, theater, the plastic arts, visuality."[24] Olga Hasty and Alyssa Dinega offer insightful remarks on Tsvetaeva's explicit hesitation to engage the visual world. Hasty argues that the aversion stems in part from Tsvetaeva's concern for the

destructive powers of the mythical "backward glance" dramatized in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, a phenomenon that "underscore[s] the tragic consequences of refusal to accept aural attestation without recourse to visual verification."[25] Hasty contends that Tsvetaeva equates the visual with shallow, surface details, "align[ing] it with that mundane obtuseness against which the poet struggles."[26] Dinega mounts a similar argument about the perils of vision exemplified in the Psyche myth, a subtext found in some of Tsvetaeva's creative works. As in the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, the Psyche myth includes the lover's gaze as a powerfully destructive force; like Orpheus's backward glance, Psyche's forbidden gaze causes "irrevocable separation."[27] Dinega argues that for Tsvetaeva "sight and vision are attributes of the non-poetic, the antipoetic, the world of phenomena rather than noumena."[28] Dinega surmises that the goal of Tsvetaeva's poetry is to achieve a kind of clairvoyance—a means of transcendent seeing without the mechanics of the eye: "her poems are her created, self-contained, chosen world; true clairvoyance occurs only when she transcends the limitation of physicality by means of an intentionally blind gaze."[29]

Scholars are certainly justified in asserting that Tsvetaeva's poetic mission was to transcend the earthly by overcoming the limitations and dangers of vision through the aural power of the poetic word. What I wish to explore here, then, is how this overarching poetic philosophy aligns with Tsvetaeva's interest in and practice of photography. Perhaps the best formulation of Tsvetaeva's views on the role of the visual world in her creative process comes from the poet herself in her 1926 essay "The Poet on Criticism" (Poet o kritike): "For the poet, the most frightening, most malicious (and most esteemed!) enemy is the visible. It is an enemy that the poet overcomes only by way of cognition. To enslave the visible [vidimoe] in the service of the invisible [nezrimoe]—that is the life of the poet . . . to translate the invisible into the visible."[30] In this passage Tsvetaeva suggests that the purpose of poetry is not to sidestep the visual world but to engage the visual and illuminate an invisible, other world. Her method involves constructing a metaphysical mode of seeing, one that is mediated through the poetic word—but also through engagement with visual texts—as a way of transcending ordinary human vision. Exploring Tsvetaeva's engagement with photography reveals some of the tensions outlined in the introduction to this volume; in particular, photography's presumed indexical relationship to its subject allows for a physical, tangible manifestation of space and time that can be transported across great distances, connecting present, living beings with

those who have died. Tsvetaeva, a poet who spent much of her adult life in emigration, is also drawn to the possibilities for bridging separations resulting from historical circumstances that placed individuals across borders, outside of their homelands, and in remarkably unstable circumstances. The photograph for Tsvetaeva operates—like dream motifs, tombstone imagery, and the poetic word itself—as a "third space" in which souls can commune across physical and metaphysical boundaries.

Beyond-seeing (Zaochnost′) and the Organs of Sight

One way to conceptualize Tsvetaeva's philosophy of vision, and her approach to art more broadly, is through an exploration of her notion of *zaochnost′* (beyond-seeing, correspondence, in absentia).[31] Some of Tsvetaeva's most important personal relationships were sustained through written correspondence and through her faith in the possibility of connecting with other individuals without seeing them face-to-face. In her recollections of Tsvetaeva, fellow émigré Olga Kolbasina-Chernova writes that the poet appropriates her own imagined vision of her correspondents, reaching for them from a distance, while they always remain seemingly just out of reach.

> Marina often constructs one-sided romances, creating her own personal image—a knight, or a hero, or even a still as yet undiscovered poet—out of a person she has met. And she treats this person as a chosen one, not noticing that this person does not share or understand her feelings. In reality she meets her heroes only through correspondence, in absentia [zaochno] (like Rainer Maria Rilke), or in partial absentia [pochti zaochno] (Pasternak). She likes to say they are of her stature [oni ei po plechu]. It's like the fascination with Casanova: he alters, searches in eternal longing [v vechnoi toske], always despairing for lack of finding.[32]

In her 1923 lyric "Zaochnost′," Tsvetaeva writes of the interplay of vision and creativity and the search for these sorts of virtual connections. The poem, written a year after she emigrated, plays on the dual meaning of "zaochnost′," referring to correspondence in writing, along with the notion of "beyond-seeing" suggested in the word's morphology. The opening lines appeal to mutuality (vzaimnost′) not to block the mythical

Castalian stream and interrupt the flow of poetic inspiration. At the same time, these opening lines offer an image of a dimension that exists outside the limits of human vision.

> Кастальскому току,
> Взаимность, заторов не ставь!
> Заочность: за оком
> Лежащая, вящая явь.[33]
>
> Mutuality, don't dam up
> The Castalian stream!
> *Absentia*: lying beyond the eye
> Is a complete waking vision.

Tsvetaeva invokes the poetic word for all-seeing eye (*oko*), perhaps most notably in her elegy *A New Year's Greeting*, in which Rilke, the all-seeing eye, has gone dark (oko smerklos′) and a third space of poetic communion emerges. Her use of the more prosaic *glaza* (eyes) in other places also indicates her poetic relationship to the visual world. In describing the organ of visual perception Tsvetaeva often characterizes eyes in expansive, even cosmic terms; they are not so much a window as a kind of black hole, an endless expanse leading to other worlds and capable of transcending space and time.[34] For instance, an early poem written in 1914 describes her husband Sergei Efron's eyes as "two abysses" that unify her devotion and sacrifices with those of great lovers, poets, and tragic figures across the ages:

> Он тонок первой тонкостью ветвей.
> Его глаза—прекрасно-бесполезны!—
> Под крыльями раскинутых бровей—
> Две бездны.
>
> В его лице я рыцарству верна,
> —Всем вам, кто жил и умирал без страху!—
> Такие—в роковые времена—
> Слагают стансы—и идут на плаху.[35]
>
> He is as thin as first spring branches.
> His eyes—so beautifully useless!—
> Under the wings of his outstretched brows
> Two abysses.

In his image I'm faithful to knightliness,
And to you all, who lived and died without fear!
Those who—in fateful times—
Lay out stanzas—and go to the
executioner's block.

This principle of transcendent vision is developed further in the following passage, in which she recalls a reading by the poet Mikhail Kuz′min in 1916. She describes his expressive eyes similarly as massive, hollowed out voids; they are "two craters—smoking":

> There were a lot of people. I don't remember anyone. I remember only K[uz′]min—his eyes.
> Listener: It looks like he has brown eyes, yes?
> —It seems to me, they're black. Marvelous. Two black suns. No, two craters—smoking ones. They were so enormous that I, despite my nearsightedness, could see them from 100 versts away, so wonderful that I can see them (I'll transport myself to the future—fifty years later—and tell my grandchildren)—even now.[36]

Tsvetaeva here offers a formula for her metaphysics of vision: the poetic word (Kuz′min's poetry) merges with the optical (his and her eyes) resulting in a powerful transcendence of space and time; she can suddenly perceive his enormous eyes across a one hundred-verst distance, and fifty years into the future. Not simply a window to the soul, eyes for this poet operate as a portal into extensive spatial and temporal realms. The visual world also functions as a way of mapping the geography of separation that is so central a theme in Tsvetaeva's poetry.[37]

Although Tsvetaeva harnesses visual imagery as a powerful poetic tool, she does not consider the function of sight, from a creative and even practical standpoint, to be about perceiving surfaces or precise details. Vision for Tsvetaeva is malleable and capable of transcending vast distances, but this bridging function trumps any sort of precision in witnessing places, people, or events. A curious aspect of Tsvetaeva's *zhiznetvorchestvo* (life-creation) is the poet's performance of nearsightedness. Tsvetaeva often spoke of her own nearsightedness, and after a certain age she apparently refused to wear glasses to correct her vision, to shield herself from the "world of ruthless optics" (mir besposhchadnoi optiki), as one friend in emigration noted.[38] At the same

time, this visual impairment may have helped to inspire this metaphysical power of vision; in her poetic imagination, vision enables her to overcome physical space and temporal boundaries, as evidenced in her descriptions of Efron's or Kuz′min's eyes, and her encounters with visual texts and artworks. In a conceptual merging of vision and blindness, Tsvetaeva's notion of compromised or mediated vision grants her a kind of clairvoyance, a form of transcendent vision that shapes both her poetic persona and her relationship to the visual world.

The same notion of transcendent, metaphysical vision informs Tsvetaeva's encounters with photography; for her, the photographic lens knows no spatial or temporal boundaries. Photographs engender intimate encounters with a variety of individuals—her deceased grandmother, Rainer Maria Rilke, the late Gronskii—from whom she is separated by insurmountable distances or death. The camera lens also works for Tsvetaeva as a personal memento mori since a pair of photographic self-portraits taken by Tsvetaeva's camera serve to prefigure the poet's own death.

Photograph as Family Spirit

Tsvetaeva's first use of the photographic image in conjunction with the poetic word to commune with the past and the world beyond the grave is found in her 1914 poem "To Grandmother" (Babushke). Her sister Anastasiia Tsvetaeva's memoirs contextualize one family photograph that inspired this poem—a portrait of the sisters' maternal grandmother:

> The daguerreotype from which the enlargement was made showed her at a time when she was pregnant with our mother. . . . And through everything, above everything, was her heavy gaze, directed off to the side, past us, into the distance. A weighty gaze, like sadness itself, like—could it be?—the anticipation of death. She died leaving behind a newborn daughter. Her gaze, like a wing, extended out over our early adolescence (we lost our mother at eleven and thirteen years, respectively). It was the very kind of wing that creates both poets and wanderers.[39]

For Marina and Anastasiia the portrait of the young Mariia Mein became both a stand-in for a living grandmother and a reminder of her untimely death following the birth of a child not long after the photograph was taken. Tsvetaeva's poem subtly takes note of how the figure seems to

hang in this balance between life and death:

> Сколько возможностей вы унесли?
> И невозможностей—сколько?—
> В ненасытимую прорву земли,
> Двадцатилетняя полька![40]
>
> How many possibilities have you carried off,
> And impossibilities—how many?
> Into the insatiable pit of the earth,
> [You], a twenty-year-old Polish girl!

In this lyric we find the first indications that in Tsvetaeva's poetic world photographs can function as a medium for communication with the world beyond. Throughout the poem the speaker poses a series of questions in search of the source of her own fiery passions and rebellious spirit. Tsvetaeva draws her inspiration from visual cues in her grandmother's photograph, which hung prominently in her parents' bedroom in the family home (figure 2.1).

The narrative begins with the portrait's external details—sleeves, lips, hands, and "tendrils of hair" (lokony v vide spirali)—in the first two stanzas, then shifts in the third stanza to her grandmother's more spiritual or personal characteristics. This shift at the poem's midpoint is prompted by the gaze of the speaker meeting that of the figure in the portrait ("Dark, severe, exacting gaze. / A look ready to defend itself "). Tsvetaeva uses the penultimate stanza to reflect on a life cut short: "How many possibilities have you carried off, / And impossibilities—how many?" But in the last stanza the speaker concludes with a final question that supports the notion that photographs, especially those of dead relatives, invite us to ponder the living spirit that resides therein—what, as noted earlier, Benjamin refers to as the *aura*: "Grandmother! This brutal rebellion / In my heart—does it not come from you?" (Babushka! Etot zhestokii miatezh / V serdtse moem—ne ot Vas li?). Tsvetaeva's narrative persona senses that the rebellious streak in her Polish ancestor lives on, not only in the details of the portrait but also in her own fiery spirit.[41]

Figure 2.1. Anastasiia Tsvetaeva, Sergei Efron, Marina Tsvetaeva (seated, left to right), Moscow, Trekhprudnyi pereulok, c. November 1911. A large photographic portrait of Tsvetaeva's grandmother, M. L. (Bernatskaia) Mein, is on the left wall. Image courtesy of Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), file 1190-2-221-1.

Photographs in Tsvetaeva's family, as her daughter Ariadna Efron remembers, were associated as much with the spirit world as with the material world. In her memoirs recounting the family's preparations to emigrate, Efron describes a set of stereoscopic photographs depicting scenes from her parents' early years in Moscow and Crimea. She conceives of these items from her family's past under the heading of "things that you can't really call 'things' because they are so much a *spirit* [veshchi, chto i veshchami ne nazovesh', nastol'ko oni —*dukh*]."[42] Many of Tsvetaeva's personal photographs have been lost, but among those that remain in various archives and collections are two sets of snapshots that inspired her poetic writing because of their deep connection to the spirit of another person: one set was sent to her by Rilke, and the other is the series taken by Tsvetaeva of Gronskii's room not long after his death.[43] The same association of photographic images with the human spirit suggested by Ariadna Efron, and the photograph's status as a memento

mori, is integral to the interrelation of photographic image and poetic text in Tsvetaeva's writings about Rilke and Gronskii.

Photograph as Meeting: Tsvetaeva and Rilke in 1926

The epistolary exchange between Tsvetaeva, Rilke, and Pasternak in the summer of 1926 is remarkable for the way the letters traverse linguistic and geographical boundaries and illuminate the struggles of three creative individuals at a time of tremendous uncertainty for each of them. The exchange was initiated by Pasternak's father, the painter Leonid Pasternak, with a congratulatory message to his old acquaintance, the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, on the occasion of the latter's fiftieth birthday. Rilke's delayed but enthusiastic response—and his praise of Boris Pasternak's poetry, which he had read in French translation—led the elder Pasternak to convey the letter to his son, who took up the correspondence and brought Tsvetaeva into the conversation. Evident in these letters is Tsvetaeva's and Pasternak's deification of Rilke, a figure who had had been elevated to the status of all-powerful muse for the younger poets. Rilke, who had spent time in Russia in his younger years, felt a nostalgic admiration for his Russian counterparts, but he was also alienated by their extreme flights of fancy and the intensity of their desire to make a pilgrimage to meet him. These fantasies were sharply at odds with his physical condition, as he struggled with leukemia in a Swiss sanatorium. Benjamin Paloff notes that what was perhaps most problematic about the contact among these individuals was that "the Muse [Rilke], like nostalgia, is supposed to exist for the Poet, but also beyond his grasp; direct communion is not supposed to be possible."[44] Yet for a brief period this communion did exist—in the letters that traversed the distances separating Rilke's Swiss sanatorium, Pasternak's Moscow, and Tsvetaeva's émigré world in Paris. Tsvetaeva's and Pasternak's visit with Rilke in the physical world was not destined to take place (Rilke died at the end of 1926); however, the exchanges in these letters engendered a variety of metaphysical encounters. The poets shared space together in their dreams, poetry, and letters, and—in the case of Rilke and Tsvetaeva—the photographic lens became instrumental in facilitating a spiritual rendezvous.[45]

Several scholars have examined the brief, highly charged correspondence of the summer of 1926, but with little attention paid to the selection of photographs the poets sent to one another.[46] These

images played a central role in shaping the trajectory of the correspondence, the themes explored therein, and even the poetic texts resulting in part from the exchange. In particular, the photographs that Rilke and Tsvetaeva exchanged during this period established them as kindred spirits, bound by their shared artistic vision and poetic vocation. The way the two interacted with and interpreted the photographs they exchanged—and the way photographs function as a substitute for meeting in the physical world—is part of what unites them as poets possessing a common conception of the metaphysics of the photographic image.

Rilke's impression, expressed in his initial letters, that the poets had missed an opportunity to meet in person resonated with a central theme in Tsvetaeva's artistic world—meetings and "nonmeetings" or "missed meetings" (razminoveniia) between poetic souls.[47] Tsvetaeva had written about this theme in relation to Aleksandr Blok and Pasternak, and now here was Rilke also lamenting that the chance had passed them by. He had been in Paris but left in August 1925; Tsvetaeva arrived from Prague just a few months later, in November of the same year. Rilke wrote to Tsvetaeva, "Why, I must wonder now, why was it not vouchsafed me to meet you, Marina Ivanovna Tsvetaeva? After Boris Pasternak's letter I must believe that such a meeting would have resulted in the deepest, innermost joy for both of us. Will we ever have a second chance to do this?!"[48] In response to these regrets about the lost opportunity to meet in person, Tsvetaeva was inspired to send a surrogate in the form of her photographic image. In her third letter to Rilke she included a passport picture of herself. In the letter she promised to send a better photograph, a portrait taken in Paris at the studio of the well-known Russian-born photographer Petr Shumov, who had photographed Auguste Rodin and his sculptures, along with the most prominent members of the Russian émigré community in Paris (figure 2.2).[49] In the same letter, Tsvetaeva does not hesitate to ask for Rilke's photograph in return: "Here is my photograph—from my passport—I am brighter and younger. A better one will follow, taken quite recently, in Paris. It was taken by Shumov, the one who photographed your great friend's work. . . . I was embarrassed to ask whether or not he had taken your photograph. I wouldn't have dared to order a copy for myself. (You have no doubt already noticed that I'm asking you—straightforward and without any shyness—for your photograph.)"[50] We can speculate that Tsvetaeva was contemplating whether she and Rilke had, at different times, shared the same physical space in Shumov's studio, "meeting," at least in the metaphysical sense, refracted in the lens

of Shumov's camera.[51] Rilke replied that Shumov had not taken his picture, a missed opportunity that amounted to yet another "nonmeeting" in Tsvetaeva's fragmented world.

Figure 2.2. Photograph of Marina Tsvetaeva taken at Petr Shumov's studio, Paris, 1926. Image courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archive.

In the same letter, Rilke goes on to explain that he was hesitant to

send Tsvetaeva his photograph. Although he planned to do so in the near future, it is clear that her gazing on his picture was nearly tantamount to meeting in person, and he was uncomfortable with the "haphazard" nature of the passport picture: "What keeps me from sending you my passport picture is not vanity but actually an awareness of just how haphazard this instantaneous snapshot really is. But I've placed mine next to yours: let's get used to this first in pictures, all right?"[52] Tsvetaeva was likely to have been intrigued by the idea that the poets would get acquainted by means of their photographs placed next to one another on a desk. She had taken note of a parallel situation, in which her author photograph was published on the same page as Pasternak's in the July 1926 issue of *Versty* that featured her *Poem of the Mountain* (Poema gory) and an excerpt from Pasternak's narrative poem *The Year 1905*.[53] She viewed their portraits and poems occupying the same space as a means of connecting their artistic spirits in both image and word. Much of Tsvetaeva's creative orientation toward her fellow poets at this time centered on the search for just such a means to connect on a spiritual level with those from whom she was separated by tremendous distances.

Photographs once again enabled the communion of poetic souls when, following a months-long pause in Rilke's letters, the German poet renewed the correspondence by sending Tsvetaeva a short note along with a gift: an envelope containing eight photographs of himself and his surroundings at the Château de Muzot, as well as his poem "Elegy for Marina Tsvetaeva-Efron" (figures 2.3 and 2.4). Moved by this offering in both photographs and verse, Tsvetaeva interpreted the meaning of the images in a way that resonated with their earlier exchange and the connection forged by their common vision of photography's capabilities. In one of the photographs she saw an anticipation of parting, which Alyssa Dinega has ascribed to Tsvetaeva's growing awareness of Rilke's deteriorating health.[54] Tsvetaeva writes: "Those dear pictures of you. Do you know what you look like in the big one? Standing in wait and suddenly hailed. And the other, smaller one—that is a parting. One on the point of departure who casts a last glance—seemingly a cursory one . . . over his garden, as one might over a page of writing before it is dispatched."[55]

The implication that Tsvetaeva sensed in these photographs a premonition of Rilke's death is in line with Barthes's vision of photographs as denoting "death in a future tense" or Sontag's discussion of the photograph as a memento mori. In addition, the above quotation can also be read in connection with Tsvetaeva's 1926 *Attempt at a Room*

(*Popytka komnaty*), a work that also builds on the notion of metaphysical paths to spiritual communion. The text of this intensely complex *poema* represents the culmination of a prominent theme in Tsvetaeva's poetry: the denial of physical space and the poet's liberation from it. In a letter to Pasternak dated February 9, 1927, following Rilke's death on December 29, 1926, Tsvetaeva explains the circumstances surrounding this poema's composition. Her insight is that its primary

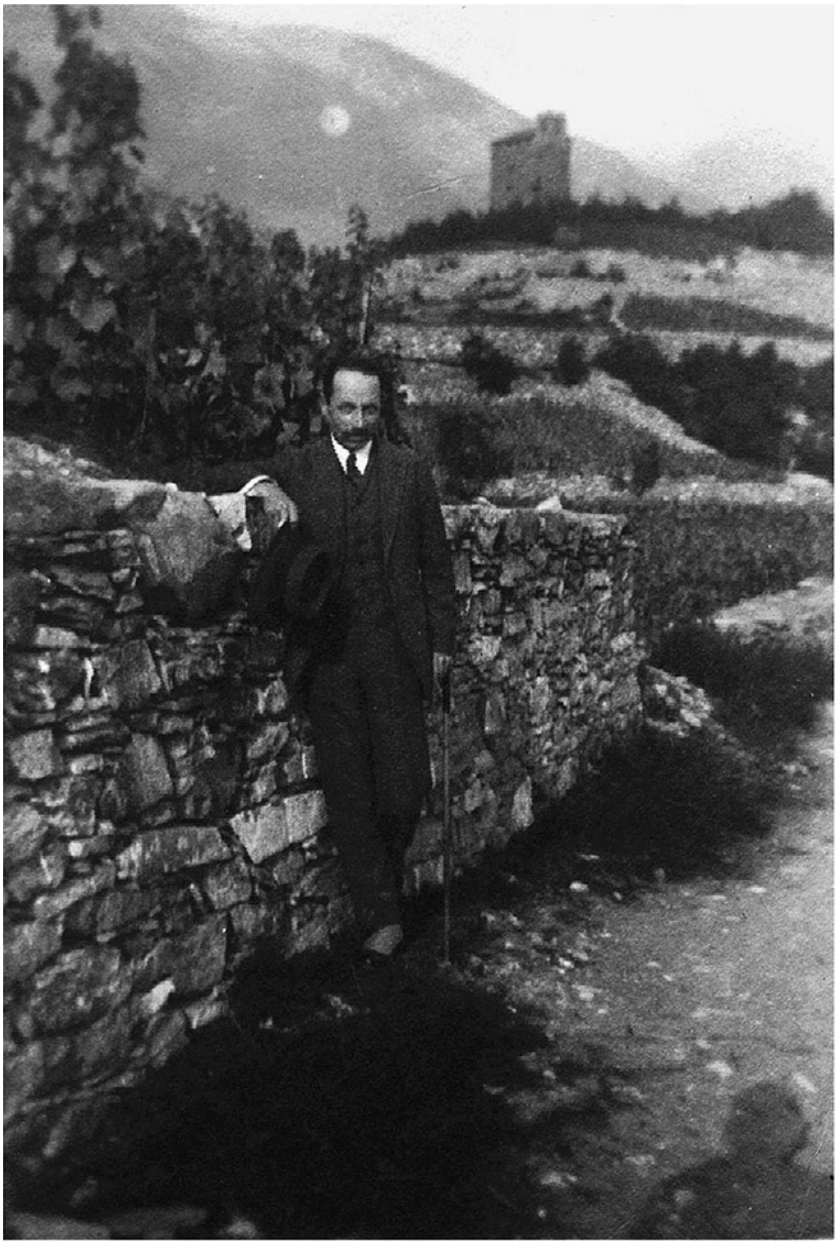


Figure 2.3. Rainer Maria Rilke in Muzot, Switzerland, 1926. Image courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archive.

Figure 2.4. "Le Potager" (The Vegetable Patch). Rainer Maria Rilke, Muzot, Switzerland, 1926. Image courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archive.

message stems from the fact that she knew on some level that she and

Rilke were not fated to meet face-to-face, but that they were destined to meet "*in another way*," that is, in the metaphysical realm: "A curious switch occurred: the poem was written during a time when I was intensely focused on him, but the poem was directed—consciously and by my own will—to you. But it turned out to be—not just about him!—but about him—now (*after* December 29). In other words, it was a premonition, an insight. I simply told him, a living being—whom I *did plan to meet!*—how we did not meet, how we met *in another way*."[56] This search for a way to connect spiritually with those she could not access physically is at the center of Tsvetaeva's encounters with photographs and is precisely what links her understanding of the power of photography to the goals of her poetic practice. This idea extends not only to the connections between uniting with Rilke through the photographic lens and the composition of *Attempt at a Room* but also her 1927 elegy to Rilke, *A New Year's Greeting*, which further builds on her metaphysical approach to vision and optics.

In *A New Year's Greeting* Tsvetaeva sends her final letter to Rilke, whose poetic soul now occupies a place high above the earth. Vision and optics are central organizing principles in the poema (Rilke is the oko, the all-seeing eye), and Tsvetaeva speaks of a liminal "third space"—a place of neither death nor life—where she and Rilke will, in body and spirit, toast the New Year.[57] The following lines demonstrate Tsvetaeva's rejection of both life and death as such and her illumination of a third space that joins this world with the world beyond:

Что мне делать в новогоднем шуме
С этой внутреннею рифмой: Райнер—умер.
Если ты, такое око смерклось,
Значит, жизнь не жизнь есть, смерть не смерть есть.
Значит—тмится, допойму при встрече!—
Нет ни жизни, нет ни смерти,—третье,
Новое.[58]

What am I to do in this New Year's noise
With this internal rhyme: Rainer—died.
If you, such an eye, has dimmed,
It means that life is not life and death is not death.
It means—it's darkening, I'll understand it all when we meet!—
There is neither life nor death—rather, a third thing,
Something new.

The quest for meeting "in another way" is fulfilled not in heaven or on earth but in this "third space," where poetic souls can come together, even when separated by death. With the "dimming" of Rilke's embodied eye (oko smerklos') and the "darkening" of the surrounding space (tmitsia), physical seeing recedes, and from the binary division of life and death emerges a space not unlike the metaphysical realm of Shumov's camera lens or the meeting place created by the two photographic portraits placed next to one another in Rilke's home. For Tsvetaeva, the photographic image, like the poetic word, creates the potential to transcend fixed boundaries of space and time, especially the separation inherent in death.

Reflections of Self and Soul: Daguerreotype as Metaphor and Image-Object

Another text, the analysis of which is enhanced by a fuller understanding of Tsvetaeva's interest in photography, is her 1931 lyric "Home" (Dom, with the opening lines "Iz-pod nakhmurennykh brovei"). Tsvetaeva's interest in the photographic medium reached its greatest intensity in the late 1920s and early 1930s, a fact that compels our reexamination of the photographic metaphor that appears in the poem's final lines. The conclusion of the poem equates the old, dilapidated house of the poem's title with a "Girlish daguerreotype / Of my soul" (Devicheskii dagerrotip / Dushi moei).[59]

Scholars have remarked on the metamorphosis in this poem of the image of the home into a kind of self-portrait of the soul.[60] What further enhances our reading is the awareness that Tsvetaeva's knowledge of the physical properties of certain photographic image-objects, such as the daguerreo-type, plays a central role in the construction of the visual and temporal layers that define this text. The visual metaphor of the daguerreotype is more than a wistful harkening back to an earlier era; instead, this image provides us with a key organizational principle for the overall design of the poem. The lyric is constructed as if the speaker is looking at a daguerreotype, seeing at once her own facial features reflected in and superimposed on an image of an old house, a vision of the self within an image from a childhood memory:

Из-под нахмуренных бровей
Дом—будто юности моей
День, будто молодость моя

Меня встречает:—Здравствуй, я![61]

Out from under scowling brows
A house—as if from my youth
A day, as if my childhood,
Meets me: Hello, it's me!

A fuller understanding of the physical properties of a daguerreotype elucidates the source of the multilayered visual images in this poem. Oliver Wendell Holmes referred to the daguerreotype as "a mirror with a memory" because of its distinct reflective properties.[62] As Adam Frank points out in his article on photography in the poetic world of Emily Dickinson, daguerreotypes were printed on polished, silvered metal plates, a highly reflective surface: "Unlike paper prints, daguerreotypes are excellent mirrors, which makes the image difficult to see as light reflects off different parts of the surface. Remarkably, when you look at a daguerreotype you are often seeing a reflection of your face or eyes: your mirror image is the ground for the portrait's figure."[63] The speaker in Tsvetaeva's poem goes on to interweave the image of her forehead under the hood of a raincoat with the ivy that grows on the roof of the old house; as *plashch* (raincoat) merges phonetically with *pliushch* (ivy), the visual imagery is also layered onto a single plane.[64] Later, the forehead becomes the archway of her father's museum, while her eyes are reflected in the thick green glass of the windowpanes.

Though newer photographic forms had replaced daguerreotypes well before Tsvetaeva was born, the poet had firsthand knowledge of the daguerreotype's physical properties; such photographic image-objects were found in the family home, for instance.[65] Though there is no single artifact, no particular daguerreotype of a house that we can identify as the source of this poem, the conjured, metaphorical image of the daguerreotype surface allows the speaker to view herself within a visual and temporal palimpsest. Through this analogical writing connecting the daguerreotype's mirroring properties to her layered visual imagery in the poem, Tsvetaeva envisions two realities at once: her current self—the reflection of her brows, forehead, and eyes—superimposed on an image that represents her soul in a previous incarnation, that is the childhood home captured on the surface of the plate. The poem creates a double exposure that permits her to examine her present émigré self in the same plane as the remembered self of her youth.[66] The photographic image continues to operate as a medium for the communion of souls, but in this

instance the mechanism is a metaphorical daguerreotype, the mirrored surface of which reflects the poet's soul, in its present and past incarnations.

As with other photo-poetic encounters in Tsvetaeva's oeuvre, this lyric operates as a space of mourning.[67] The speaker of "Home" grieves the loss of her childhood and her former life in Russia. The poem speaks of a home not unlike her childhood haunts (the house on Trekhprudnyi Lane in Moscow or the family dacha in Tarusa). Amid these memories are thoughts about the end of the poet's life, which the speaker predicts will be played out far from the childhood home yet still accompanied by lyric poetry: "From a distant street / I'll end my days behind my poems / As if behind the branches of an elder-berry tree" ("Ot ulitsy vdali / Ia za stikhami konchu dni— / Kak za vetviami buziny").[68] Invoking a photographic metaphor for layered visions of the self allows for the construction of a powerful image of a present and former self. At the same time, by avoiding any sort of direct ekphrastic writing, the poet asserts the power of the poetic word to substitute for an embodied visual text that might differently represent her experience in the material world.

Photographs across Borders and Ages: The Prague Knight and the Ghost of Andrei Belyi

A photograph, as elegiac image-object, also plays a central role in Tsvetaeva's farewell to Prague. Her desire to remain connected forever with this beloved city is fulfilled in a tangible way using a photographic portrait of a different sort, an image of the Prague Knight on the Charles Bridge (figure 2.5). Her writing about the photograph further underscores the function of photography in Tsvetaeva's creative world as a means to transcend geographical and temporal space. In this instance, it is a photograph of the statue of the Prague Knight that becomes her touchstone, and she sees her own likeness in this image of this emissary from a place she cares for but to which she will not return.

In early October 1925, during the weeks leading up to her departure from Prague to the Paris suburbs, Tsvetaeva wrote to Teskova seeking a rather specific memento for future inspiration and to remind her of the beloved city she was leaving behind:

> I would really like to know the history—time period and symbolism—of that Prague knight who stands on—or rather below

> —the Charles Bridge: the boy guarding the river. For me, he is a symbol of faithfulness (to myself! not to others). And I'm dying to get a hold of an image of him—where might I look? I can't find one anywhere—a print to remember him by. Tell me all you know about him. Since he's not a woman, it's okay to ask, "how old are you?" Oh, what a wondrous story one could write with Prague as the setting! Without plot, without bodies: a novel of Souls.[69]

Tsvetaeva received from Teskova a photogravure of the Prague Knight ahead of her departure and remained fascinated with the history of the knight's legend throughout her years in Paris. She identified closely with the statue, dedicating her 1923 lyric "Prague Knight" (Prazhskii rytsar′) to the statue on the Charles Bridge and seeing in the knight's stature and boyish features a version of herself ("Ia tebe po rostu / Prazhskii rytsar ′!").[70] "I have a good friend in Prague, a stone knight, whose face looks very much like mine. He stands on the bridge and guards the river: vows, rings, waves, bodies.

Figure 2.5. The Prague Knight statue, 2013. Image courtesy of David Danaher.

He is approximately five hundred years old, yet he is very young: a stone boy. When you think of me, visualize me with him."[71] In discerning a visual connection between the statue's facial features and her likeness, Tsvetaeva creates a stronger bond with the hero of the Czech legend; the figure of the brave youth becomes for her a spiritual companion, who stays with her and ensures that she remained grounded in and oriented

toward the city of Prague, even as she is physically removed from it.[72]

The heightened importance of the visual image of the knight is reinforced much later, in October 1938, when Tsvetaeva again writes to Teskova, this time requesting a replacement for the photogravure of the knight, which had been lost.[73] Tsvetaeva's request is very specific: she is seeking a clear, black-and-white, large-format photograph of her Prague knight:

> Another ardent request: send me a large picture of my Knight, and another of the city, taken from the Hradčany (Castle District) . . . not a reproduction of a painting or drawing and not in color—a good, clear photograph. . . . Once—ten years ago!—you sent me the Knight (a large, full-body shot). But then the late N. P. Gronskii begged me to give it to him. I've been searching for a long while now—in vain—and there's no trace of it anywhere. (His possessions have all been divided between his mother, his father, his sister, and his friends . . .) I'd like the picture to be large, with a very clear face, so that all the features are visible. As little background as possible, so that he fills the space—a large figure, if possible. If you can conceive of this. I would be very, very happy; this for me is a sacred wish, one that simply cannot be fulfilled here. And please—quickly!
>
> Oh, how I miss Prague—why did I leave?! I thought it would only be for two weeks, and now thirteen years have passed. November 1 will be exactly thirteen years since we—Alia, Mur and I—entered Paris.[74] . . .
>
> M.
>
> The knight—also a photograph, not a reproduction of a painting!!![75]

Repeating her request in her next letter of November 10, 1938, Tsvetaeva reinforces the importance of the documentary photographic image (contrasting this with what she defines as "foggy, artistic" photography). She writes, "Don't worry about the knight: send me, if you have one, a simple postcard, where he is as large and clear as possible . . . Just not one of those foggy (artistic) things, but rather a simple photograph, if possible, *face* [*Fr.* face forward, head-on]."[76] At the time she was requesting this photograph from Teskova, Tsvetaeva was concerned by the historical events taking place in Czechoslovakia. She spent 1938–39 at work on what would be her last cycle of poems, *Poems to Bohemia* (Stikhi k Chekhii), her

poetic response to the Munich Pact, and Adolf Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland. Days after the announcement of the military mobilization, she wrote to Teskova, "I love Bohemia infinitely, and I am infinitely grateful to her, but I don't wasn't to *weep* over her (one doesn't weep over someone in good health and she is the only country who is still healthy—it is the others that are sick!), I don't want to weep over her, but *sing* to her."[77] Although Tsvetaeva's request for the image of her Prague Knight was motivated in part by her work on this cycle, the pattern of Tsvetaeva's use of the photographic image-object as a means of connecting with a distant soul—in this case the city of Prague, and the spirit of the legendary medieval knight—is consistent with the larger framework of her photo-poetic encounters. She is careful to specify that it is a photograph she desires, not a reproduction. It is the photograph's indexical nature, the fact that the image bears witness to a particular time and place and is derived directly from that moment, which enables the poet to connect spiritually to Prague and all it represents.

Another example of the photograph's function for Tsvetaeva as a boundary or border line dividing the realms of the living and the dead can be seen in her interpretation of the photographs of Andrei Belyi that appeared in the issue of the Paris émigré daily newspaper *Latest News* (Poslednie novosti) announcing his death in early January 1934 (figures 2.6–2.8).[78] The images seem to actualize what Tsvetaeva understands on a metaphorical level—that photographs have the power to connect us spiritually with those we cannot access in the world around us. The "light-writing" inherent in the etymology of the term "photograph" becomes a means of illuminating Belyi's path to the world beyond the grave.[79] As Tsvetaeva points out in "A Captive Spirit" (Plennyi dukh), Belyi foretold in writing his death "from the sun's rays," his own form of photographic prophecy.[80]

Tsvetaeva's interpretation of Belyi's photographs centers on a visual "crossing over" (*perekhod*), a transgression of boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead:

> Gentlemen, look closely at the two final portraits of Andrei Bely in "The Latest News." . . .
>
> A chance photograph? A stroll? I don't know about others, but I, having glanced at the snapshot, immediately named it: the crossing. Thus and not otherwise, with that very gait, in that same old hat, with that same walking stick, bounding away from that very building, along that

walkway and without noticing the crossing, Andrei Bely crossed into the other world. That picture [*snimok*] is an astral picture.

The other picture is just his face. A human face? Oh, no. Are those human eyes? Have you seen eyes like that on a man? Do not talk of the bad reproduction, the poor quality of the newsprint paper, and so on. All that, all those newspaper flaws, this time, on this rarest of occasions, served the poet well. From the page of *The Latest News* the face of a spirit looks at us, with eyes through which shines that otherworldly light. Shines through—on us.[81]

ПОСЛѢДНІЯ НОВОСТИ

ЕЖЕДНЕВНАЯ ГАЗЕТА ПОДЪ РЕДАКЦІЕЙ П. Н. МИЛЮКОВА

Александра Григорьевича Константиновского

Байоннскій скандалъ

Интерпелляціи въ палатѣ депутатовъ

Выступленіе Камилла Шотана

Вчерашнія демонстраціи

Въ Румыніи

Въ СССР

Разстрѣлъ 98-ми

Умеръ Андрей Бѣлый

Послѣ казни вамъ дерь Любе

Японія и СССР

Рѣчь Шотана

Figure 2.7. A close-up of the photograph of Andrei Belyi, *Poslednie novosti*, January 12, 1934, 1. The headline proclaims, "Andrei Belyi died" and the caption

reads, “The famous writer Andrei Belyi (B. N. Bugaev) died on 8 January in Moscow. (See page 2).”

ПОСЛѢДНІЯ НОВОСТИ

„Братъ короля Георга“

Лондонъ, 12 января.

Чарльзъ Гордонъ Гай Хэддонъ, претендующій на то, что онъ «побочный братъ» короля Георга, обратился въ судъ съ просьбой вызвать свидѣтеля, который можетъ удостовѣрить, что онъ дѣйствительно сынъ герцога Кларенса, старшаго сына Эдуарда VII.

Хэддонъ утверждаетъ, что онъ не «побочный двоюродный» братъ Георга V, а вполнѣ законный, такъ какъ герцогъ Кларенсъ былъ тайно обвѣнчанъ съ его матерью.

Судья удовлетворилъ ходатайство и постановилъ вызвать указаннаго свидѣтеля.

Андрей Бѣлый

Какъ видно изъ совѣтскихъ газетъ, смерть Андрея Бѣлаго послѣдовала отъ артеріосклероза. Кремація состоялась 10 января.

Памятникъ Полю Деруледу

Недавно исковерканный памятникъ Деруледу у сквера Лабордъ будетъ возстановленъ. Муниципальный совѣтъ ассигновалъ 30.000 франк. на расходы по отливкѣ изъ бронзы новаго памятника, который будетъ точной копіей прежняго. Разница будетъ состоять только въ томъ, что прежняя статуя была высѣчена изъ мрамора, новый же памятникъ будетъ бронзовый.

Портретъ Данте Микеланджелло

Лондонъ, 12 января.

«Дэйли Телеграфъ» телеграфируютъ изъ Рима, что директоръ ватиканскаго музея, проф. Могаро открылъ среди фресокъ Сикстинской капеллы прекрасный портретъ Данте, работы Микеланджелло.

„Арійцы“ встревожены

Берлинъ, 12 января (ЕТА).

Германскіе промышленные круги озабочены тѣмъ, что бѣжавшіе изъ Германіи промышленники-евреи основываютъ за-границей заводы, которые могутъ конкурировать съ нѣмецкими.

Съ другой стороны, эмигрировавшіе спеціалисты знаютъ немало техническихъ секретовъ, которые, въ частности, въ области химической и текстильной промышленности, составляли монополію Германіи.

Смерть герцогини Альба

Мадридъ, 12 января.

Скончалась герцогиня Альба, жена герцога Альба и Бервика. Покойная была дочерью герцога Аліага и считалась одной изъ самыхъ красивыхъ женщинъ Европы.

Figure 2.8. Photograph of Andrei Belyi, *Poslednie novosti*, January 12, 1934, 2. The caption reads, “As we see from accounts in Soviet newspapers, the death of Andrei Belyi occurred as a result of atherosclerosis [heart disease]. He was cremated on 10 January.”

Photography after Loss: Nikolai Gronskii and Tombstone

If Tsvetaeva's photographic practices prior to the early 1930s were limited to distributing and describing photographs taken by others, her friendship with the young aspiring poet Nikolai Pavlovich Gronskii (1909–34) is one that kindled in her a deeper interest in photography and prompted her for the first time to begin to look through the camera lens and take photographs.[82] Tsvetaeva described the somewhat unlikely friendship (she was twice his eighteen years when they met) as being founded on an exchange of knowledge and talents.[83] Certainly, Tsvetaeva's greatest gifts to the young Gronskii were lessons in poetic expression; she acted as both poetic mother and muse.[84] Among the skills Gronskii taught Tsvetaeva in return was the art of taking photographs. Their shared interest in photography, and its role in Tsvetaeva's composition of the *Tombstone* cycle, provides further evidence of the role that photographic seeing played in Tsvetaeva's personal and poetic attempts to overcome the separation between the living and the dead.

Years before his death, as his friendship with Tsvetaeva was just beginning, it was Gronskii who taught the elder poet how to use a camera. In one of her first letters to her protégé, dated April 2, 1928, Tsvetaeva made the following request: "I really would like for you to teach me to take photographs. Sergei Iakovlevich is busy now until very late at night and I wouldn't dare to bother him with the camera, especially at one o'clock in the morning! And Mur is growing. And the film plates are loaded. Come as soon as you can. . . . We'll discuss Pasternak's prose . . . and taking photographs."[85] Evi dence exists that Tsvetaeva became an active amateur photographer, thanks to Gronskii's instruction. In a letter to Sergei Efron dated September 19, 1928, Tsvetaeva exclaims, "I am born a photographer!" (Ia rozhdena fotografom!), and describes staying up all night developing her latest photographs.[86] At a time when Tsvetaeva was encountering an increasingly hostile publishing environment, it seems that photography—taking, developing, and distributing amateur photographs of people and places dear to her—became an alternate outlet for her creative energies.

Until 2014, scholars writing on Tsvetaeva's reaction to Gronskii's death had not had available to them a series of photographs that were taken by Tsvetaeva of Gronskii's empty room in the first days of December 1934, approximately two weeks after his death.[87] Viewing the images alongside their corresponding text, *Tombstone*, especially its first

poem, we sense in both the photographs and poems that Tsvetaeva is searching for a trace of her dear friend; but Gronskii's soul is elusive, and the kind of meeting she had with Rilke in *A New Year's Greeting* is not destined to repeat itself here.

Stephen Cheeke offers a different reading of the exigency of photographs that helps make sense of the tension between presence and absence in Tsvetaeva's photographic and poetic representations of Gronskii's living space. If Benjamin insists that photographs demand from us a story, caption, or narrative, Cheeke reads in photographs a deafening silence: "The dumbness of the photographic image, its refusal to speak, invites an act of response, but offers in return a silence thicker even than that of painting because the camera seems to dissolve the agency not only of the subject but of the photographer too, cutting life into 'bits' that resist assimilation, that seem not to be created but rather directly cut out of the 'real.'"[88]

As we unpack the relationship between the photographic study of the apartment and the poetic elegy it engendered, we find that the search for a trace of Gronskii's soul that might remain in the objects he leaves behind leads to dramatically different results from what Tsvetaeva achieved in *A New Year's Greeting*. Unlike the connection she creates with Rilke in the afterlife through the power of the poetic word, here the camera's act of "cutting life into bits" has intensified for Tsvetaeva the refusal of these assembled images—another "attempt at a room"—to reveal Gronskii to her. The narrative she maps onto the pictures in her writing is one of a continually thwarted attempt at connection. Instead, the photographs comprise a thoroughly concrete body of evidence of the absolute loss of the deceased.

One photograph from the series depicts Gronskii's writing desk still covered with books (figure 2.9), a picture not unlike the photograph Rilke had sent of his desk in 1926 (figure 2.10). In the foreground of the image of Gronskii's desk, in the lower right corner of the photograph, we see part of a bed frame that is slightly out of focus. Attached to the desk is a lamp, and a chair stands on the floor behind the desk. The focal points of this photograph, the writing desk and chair, correspond to the abandoned table and chair in the first stanza of the cycle's opening poem:

"Иду на несколько минут . . ."
В работе (хаосом зовут
Бездельники) оставив стол,
Отставив стул—куда ушел?[89]

"I'm going out for a minute . . ."
Leaving the table deep in work
(What the lazy call chaos)
Leaving the chair—where have you gone?

Figure 2.9. Nikolai Gronskii's writing desk in his Paris apartment. Photograph by Marina Tsvetaeva, December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-2-256 no.9.

Figure 2.10. Cabinet de travail (Muzot). A photograph of Rainer Maria Rilke's writing desk in Muzot, which he sent to Tsvetaeva in 1926. Image courtesy of the Evgenii Borisovich Pasternak and the Pasternak Family Archive.

This poem, written January 3, 1935, begins with the voice of the deceased poet. We are meant to understand this line as the last words spoken by Gronskii as he set out for the Pasteur station of the Paris Metro, where an accident on the subway platform would take his life. If we read this stanza in the context of the photograph, the abandoned writing desk and chair become the point of departure in a search for a way to reconnect with the poet's soul.[90] Though Tsvetaeva resurrects Gronskii's lost voice in the lines of her text, it is the absence of the body that is central in this work. While the locus of poetic creation (the writing desk) remains—its physical presence reinforced by the tangible photographic prints—the lyric speaker struggles to make sense of the sudden loss of the living being to whom the abandoned belongings metonymically refer.

The second stanza works to reinforce the motif of a vain search for the poetic soul in the earthly realm—in this case, the city of Paris. The rejection of immortality that we find throughout the text begins here with the speaker's incredulous reaction to the absence not just of the body but seemingly the poet's soul as well:

> Опрашиваю весь Париж.
> Ведь в сказках лишь да в красках лишь
> Возносятся на небеса!
> Твоя душа—куда ушла?[91]
>
> I ask around all of Paris,
> For it's only in fairytales and in pigments
> That they ascend to the heavens!
> Your soul—where has it gone?

The speaker claims that it is only "in fairytales" (v skazkakh) and "in pigments" (v kraskakh)—a reference to icon painting—that the dead are raised to the heavens.[92] The implication is that Tsvetaeva's search for the younger poet's soul comes up empty, and faith in the afterlife seems illusory. Another photograph from the series may have prompted the reference to icon painting in these lines. The set includes a snapshot of an icon—the Savior-Not-Made-by-Hands (spas nerukotvornyi)—which hangs above Gronskii's empty bed and was painted by the young man's artist mother (figure 2.11).

It is worth considering the ontological link between this particular icon and the photographic snapshot. The Savior-Not-Made-by-Hands icon is based on an image of Christ that was transferred directly onto the cloth used to wipe his face.[93] The photographic snapshot, an image taken directly from life and developed by mechanical and chemical means, is also an acheiropoietic text

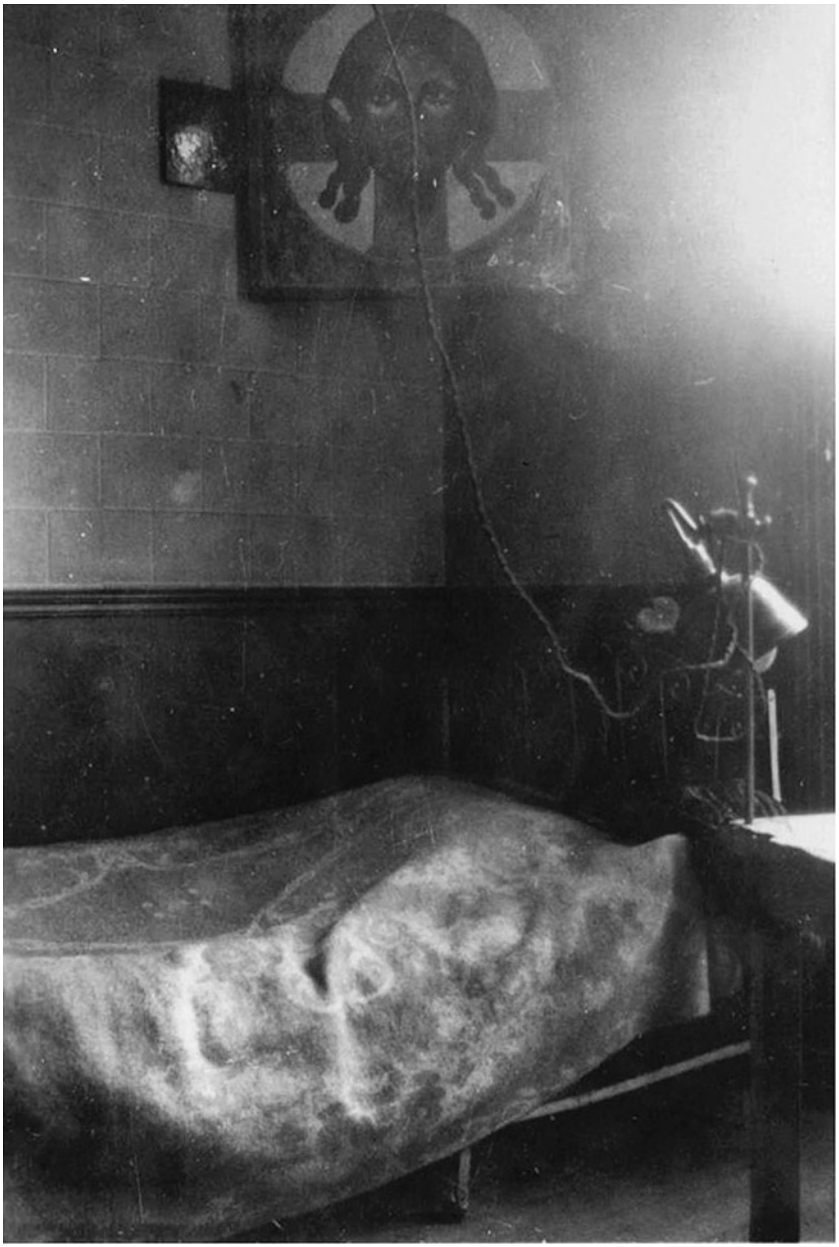


Figure 2.11. Savior-Not-Made-by-Hands icon hangs above Nikolai Gronskii's bed in his Paris apartment. Icon painted by his mother, Natalia Gronskaia. Photograph by Marina Tsvetaeva in December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 119002-256, no. 11.

(*nerukotvornyi*, not made by hands). Yet, despite the symbolism of the icon in the photograph, Tsvetaeva's lines repeatedly reject the promise of an afterlife in heaven, instead seeking out a trace of the departed in fixed images of the objects that remain on this earth. The lifeless objects in the photographs fail to offer the desired consolation, and the poet concludes that the soul can only be preserved in the memories of the living.

The third stanza of the poem also has a direct photographic analog; Tsvetaeva directs her gaze—and her camera lens—at a cabinet full of books:

> В шкафу—двустворчатом, как храм,
> Гляди: все книги по местам.
> В строке—все буквы налицо.
> Твое лицо—куда ушло?[94]
>
> In the cabinet—double-doored like a cathedral,
> Look: all the books are in their place.
> In the line of verse—all letters are visible.
> Your face—where has it gone?

Several of Tsvetaeva's photographs feature a large, two-paneled cabinet that stands against the wall near the desk (figure 2.12). In one of the snapshots, the cabinet has been opened, "like a cathedral" (kak khram), revealing shelves full of books (figure 2.13). Within the text of the corresponding poem, the rhyming of *nalitso* (visible, immanent) and *tvoe litso* (your face) further reinforces the paradox of the absence of body with the presence of the poet's surrogates: his books of poetry.

The poem's final stanza, three simple questions in one, further emphasizes the absence of the body:

> Твое лицо,
> Твое тепло,
> Твое плечо—
> Куда ушло?[95]
>
> Your face,
> Your warmth,
> Your shoulder—
> Where has it gone?

The lack of human figures in the photographs reinforces the poet's

persistent questioning and her emphasis on the absence of the body. What differentiates the Gronskii elegy and corresponding photographs from the photo-poetic representations of Rilke, Tsvetaeva's grandmother, or even her

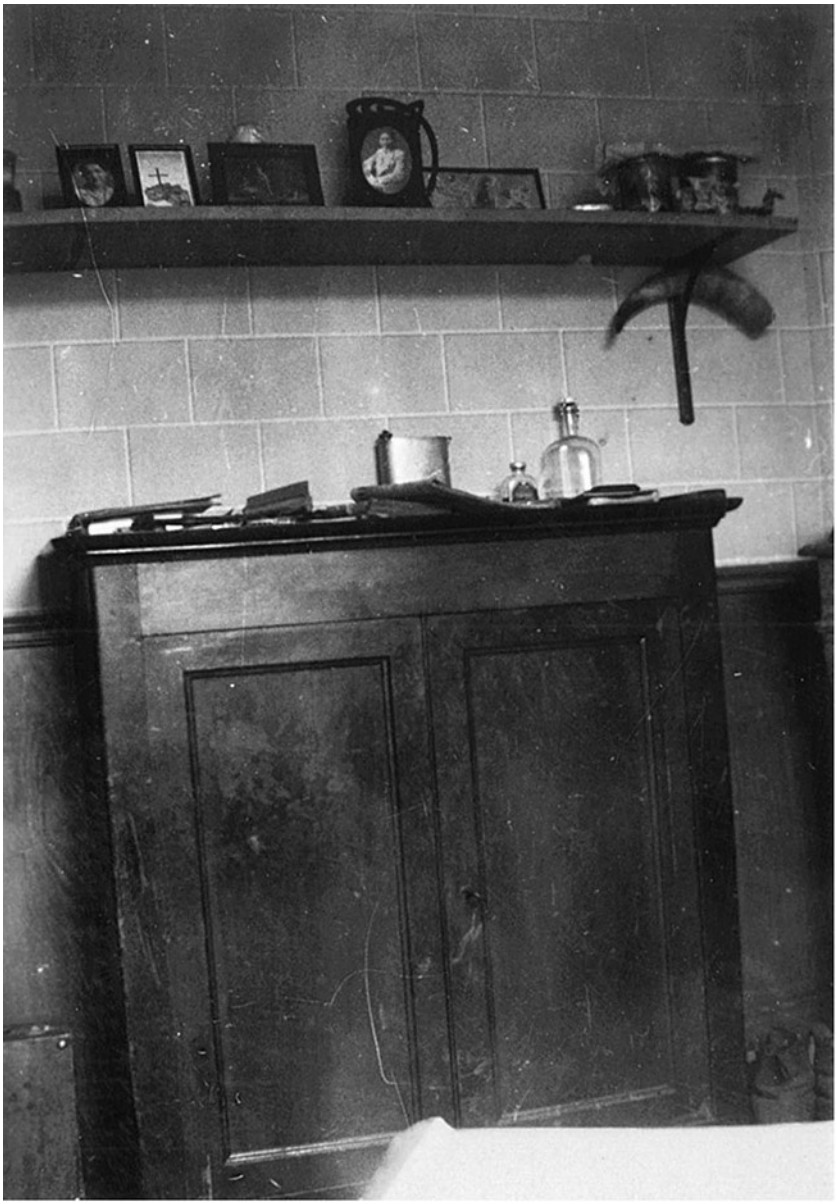


Figure 2.12. Two-paneled cabinet in Nikolai Gronskii's Paris apartment.

Photograph by Marina Tsvetaeva in December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-2-256, no. 6.

de facto self-portrait in the 1931 lyric "Home" is the camera lens's failure to provide a "living" image of Gronskii through which Tsvetaeva could have somehow connected to his soul.

Though the snapshots capture neither Gronskii's body nor his essence or aura, the corporeal imagery of this final stanza—the face, shoulder, and bodily warmth—nevertheless finds representation in Tsvetaeva's photographic study of the apartment, but only through surrogate objects. Invoked in the picture of his empty bed, above which hangs the icon discussed earlier, is the absence of warmth from the young man's body (figure 2.11). His face is represented in the two busts that sit on the mantel, both created by his mother (figure 2.14).[96] Despite these likenesses of Gronskii, a disappointed Tsvetaeva wrote to Teskova that Natalia Gronskaia decided against creating a death mask of her son: "His mother is now making a large sculpture of his face. She didn't make a death mask, however, because there were *slight* scars. *I* would have taken a mask. Now she regrets it."[97]

Figure 2.13. Open view of books stored in two-paneled cabinet in Nikolai Gronskii's apartment in Paris. Photograph by Marina Tsvetaeva in December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-2-256, no. 3.

It is worth noting that the expression "to make a death mask" (snimat

′/ sniat′ masku) in Russian uses the same verb as "to photograph" (snimat ′/ sniat′), a linguistic coincidence that may not have been lost on the poet-photographer Tsvetaeva. As was already stated, several important theorists of photography have drawn connections between the photograph and the death mask. Bazin's "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," for instance, suggests the following: "There is room . . . for a study of the psychology of the lesser plastic arts, the molding of death masks, for example, which likewise involves a certain automatic process. One might consider photography in this sense as a molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light."[98] Although the posthumous sculpture of her late friend, the nonexistent death mask, and the photographs of his room—all represent similar ways of attempting (and ultimately failing) to hold on to the image of the dead, Tsvetaeva's poem suggests that there is little comfort to be found in the cold, sculpted face of the young Gronskii, just as there is little consolation in the notion of resurrection suggested by the Orthodox icon. One way of thinking about Tsvetaeva's photographs of Gronskii's room is as the near equivalent of a death mask: an attempt by the living to overcome or deny death by preserving something of the body of the deceased. However, this does not explain why Tsvetaeva bothered to take pictures of Gronskii's room and belongings when she certainly had access to earlier photographs of him.

The practice of domestic interior photography suggests another potential context for positioning these photographs historically. Sarah Anne Carter argues that "at the most basic level, interior photographs transformed rooms and homes into a legible series of representations."[99] Carter draws on philosopher Gaston Bachelard's theory of home, as outlined in his *Poetics of Space*: "A house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability."[100] Interior photography was practiced in Russia as well, and Tsvetaeva was intimately familiar with it since her own family hired a photographer to document the interior and exterior of their home in late 1911. Tsvetaeva's mother had died in 1906, and Marina and her sister Anastasiia were to marry in 1912; the session with the photographer, recounted in Anastasiia's diary, took place on the eve of their departure from the family home to begin their new married lives elsewhere: "We have invited a photographer and are taking pictures of the house, moving from bottom to top, all the rooms; the camera's lens is capturing these random objects so that the rooms will always and forever appear just the way we are used to seeing them. . . . How will our home look on paper? How will we look at it? And how, many years in the

future, will we cast our gaze on it when we are all separated from one another?"[101] Judging from Anastasiia's account and Marina Tsvetaeva's own writings, the act of creating tangible images of a stable space accompanies an experience of loss: loss of the family home, anticipation of the loss of a meeting with Rilke, and the loss of

Figure 2.14. Fireplace mantel with sculpted busts of Nikolai Gronskii. Photograph by Marina Tsvetaeva in Gronskii's Paris apartment, December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-2-256, no. 10.

Gronskii. The photographs become tangible, readable memory-spaces to take with her into the future.

Another way to read the images has to do not with preserving an image of loss but rather with trying to capture the image of some living remnant. This suggests that Tsvetaeva is seeking a way to connect to the ghost of her friend in the afterlife, a practice not unlike late-nineteenth-century spirit photography.[102] In developing these photographs by hand the poet may have hoped to see some evidence of Gronskii's spirit appear to her through the medium of photography. The absence of visible evidence of his living spirit in the photographic prints contributes to the rejection of an afterlife that is found throughout the poems to Gronskii.

In the second poem of the *Tombstone* cycle, Tsvetaeva's search for Gronskii's soul becomes increasingly futile, as the poem's speaker—through optical motifs that recall Tsvetaeva's *A New Year's Greeting* and her 1927 *Poem of the Air* (Poema vozdukha)—delves deep into the earth and circles the heavens above yet finds no trace of Gronskii, neither in body nor soul. The final stanza of this second poem, however, seems to house the answer to the otherwise empty search. The speaker concludes in the final lines that if the young poet lives on in any form, it is within those who have cherished him and his verse:

> И если где-нибудь ты есть—
> Так—в нас. И лучшая вам честь,
> Ушедшие—презреть раскол:
> Совсем ушел. Со всем—ушел.[103]
>
> And if you exist anywhere at all—
> It's within us. And the best way to honor you,
> You departed ones—is to disparage the split:
> He's gone completely. He's taken everything.

In an essay devoted to Tsvetaeva's *A New Year's Greeting*, "About One Poem" (Ob odnom stikhotvorenii), Joseph Brodsky asserted that a poet writing an elegy on the death of a fellow poet inevitably creates a kind of self-elegy, a "self-portrait," meditating on his or her own death.[104] Tsvetaeva broadens the elegiac referent, shifting from addressing a singular "you" (*ty*) to addressing the plural "departed ones" (*ushedshie*).

The latter can refer to creative personalities, other poets, or even Tsvetaeva's poetic soul, which would one day depart this earth. She suggests here that all poets should be honored in the same way after death; though the deceased departed this world completely, we must reject the notion that nothing of them remains. What remains is what exists inside us: the memory of the departed and in the verses they leave behind or inspire in their wake.

A haunting final photograph from the series reveals that Tsvetaeva's visual study of the things Gronskii left behind, as seen through the camera lens, also takes the form of self-elegy. It seems that Tsvetaeva tried to rectify the lack of a human presence in the images by being photographed herself, framed by Gronskii's abandoned possessions. Documenting her presence in this space—first in the form of her books on the shelf and later in full body—is the final effort to harness the power of the photograph to capture the magnitude of her personal loss and ground her memories in a tangible form. The image is made all the more powerful by a failure to advance the film; the photograph is thus transposed into the liminal space of double exposure. A portrait of Tsvetaeva sitting at Gronskii's desk (shot from the same angle as the photograph of Rilke's desk) is fixed on the same negative as a close-up shot of the desk lamp, in ninety-degree rotation (figures 2.15–2.17).

It is not clear whether this ghostly double exposure was intentional on Tsvetaeva's part. It may well have occurred as the result of her neglecting to advance the film before handing the camera to the other person in the room who took the second shot (most likely Gronskii's father). Aside from sending a print of the cabinet to Teskova, Tsvetaeva makes no mention of these photographs in her surviving letters or diaries.[105] Central to our reading of this haunting double-exposed image must be the fact of its preservation:

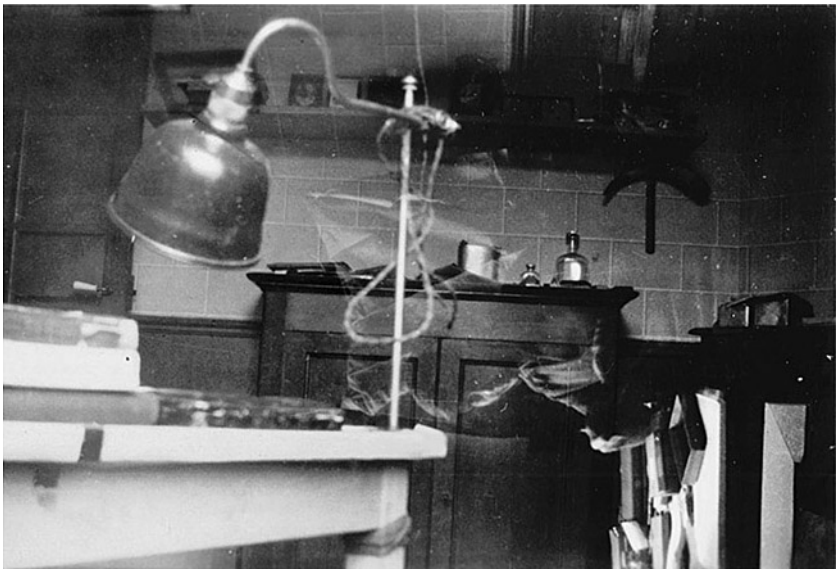


Figure 2.15. Double-exposed image (horizontal) of desk, cabinet, and desk lamp. In the apartment of Nikolai Gronskii, Paris, December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-2-256, no. 5.

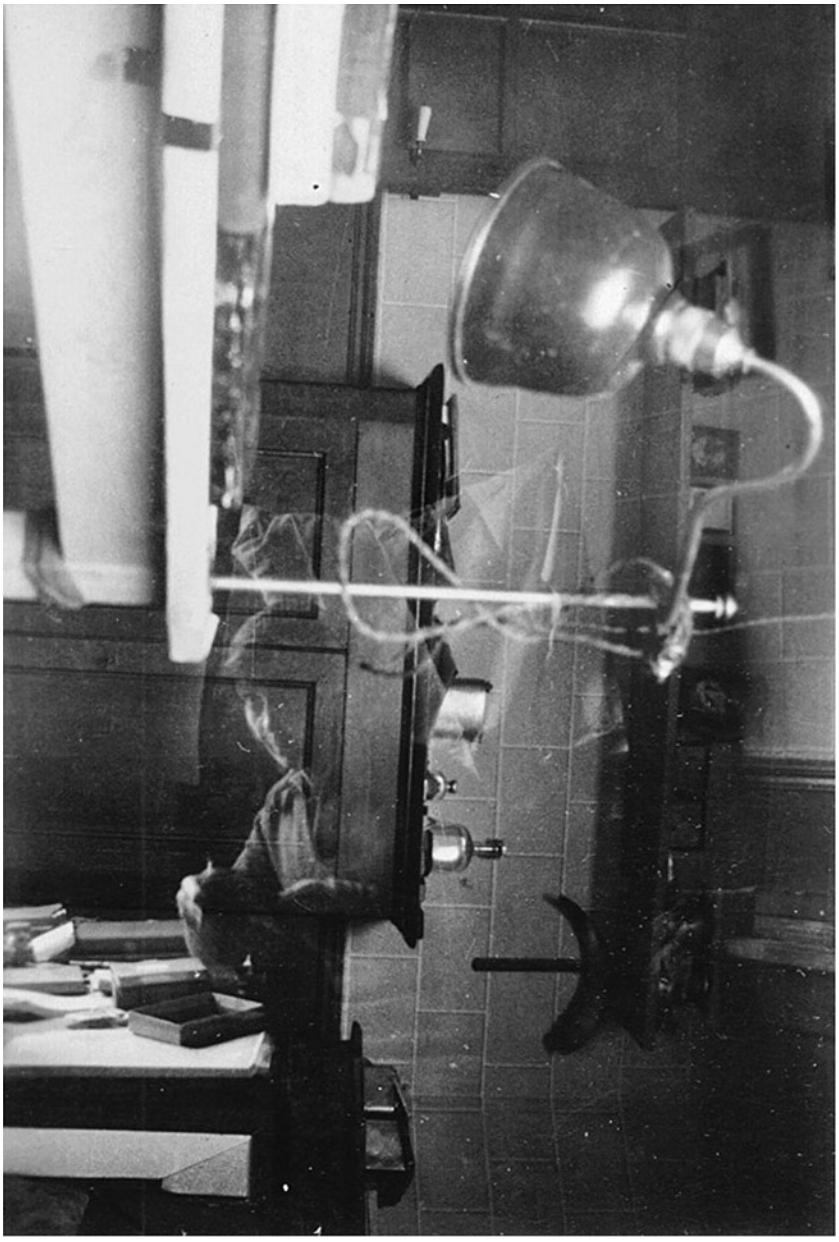


Figure 2.16. Ninety-degree rotated view of the double-exposed image; figure sitting at a desk in the second image is more visible in the lower left. In the apartment of Nikolai Gronskii, Paris, December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-2-256, no. 5.

Figure 2.17. Highlight of the figure (Marina Tsvetaeva) sitting at Gronskii's desk holding an object (a book, perhaps) in her hand. Author of photograph unknown. In the apartment of Nikolai Gronskii, Paris, December 1934. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-2-256, no. 5.

Tsvetaeva valued it at a time when double exposure was still considered by many to be an amateur error, although the technique was being practiced by avant-garde and surrealist artists.[106] The effect of this photograph, part of what makes it stand out from the rest, is that it serves to connect the architecture of space with the realm of the spirit. The other photographs in the series effectively circumscribe the physical space of Gronskii's creative activities in their panoramic study of the room, even as the poems they inspire erect a distinctly nonphysical monument to the enduring power of poetry in the *exegi monumentum* tradition of Gavriil Derzhavin and Alexander Pushkin by way of Horace. The double-exposed photograph, with its two distinct axes, draws the viewer into another dimension, one that connects the space of the room with the spiritual communion of poet and reader. In the photograph, Tsvetaeva sits at Gronskii's writing table and holds in her hands a small book, perhaps a volume of his poetry, as if to say, "This is what truly remains."

Burying the Dead, Burying the Self

It is all the more striking that Tsvetaeva herself becomes a part of the metaphorical monument she erects for Gronskii in both her poems and her photographic cycle because she will repeat this motif several years later, again with the help of the camera. On the eve of her return to the Soviet Union in 1939, Tsvetaeva used her last francs to place an actual tombstone name-plate (*nadgrobnaia plita*) in Paris's Montparnasse Cemetery on the grave of her husband's parents and brother, who had also met a tragic end approximately thirty years earlier.[107] After a series of setbacks, Tsvetaeva finally managed to place a marker on the grave; she then took photographs of the gravesite to send to other members of the Efron family. When we compare the photographs to the letters she wrote about her struggles to pay tribute to the deceased, the act of burying the dead emerges as a haunting form of self-elegy.

In a letter dated June 15, 1938, Tsvetaeva asks for assistance in determining how Cyrillic letters on a Russian grave in the French cemetery should look. Having access to little money at the time, Tsvetaeva was only able to inscribe the first and last names of the deceased; adding patronymics and birth and death dates would have been prohibitively expensive.[108] Tsvetaeva jokingly remarks in the letter to Vladimir Sosinskii that, given her poor sense of direction, she would be at such a loss trying to navigate the cemetery plots that she would likely end

up finding herself buried there among the graves (*samopokhoronius′*). Shrouded in black humor, this remark reveals the link in Tsvetaeva's consciousness between burying the dead and burying the self:

> In addition, I don't know—and there isn't time to verify . . . whether all the letters are the same size, or are there capital and lowercase letters, for example
>
> Iakov—or IAKOV.
>
> Perhaps you know? There are only a few Russian graves at Montparnasse and besides, with my terrible sense of direction, if I were to crawl around there, I'd simply never make my way out. I would end up burying myself [*sama—pokhoronius′*]: I'll self-bury [*samopokhoronius′*].[109]

Tsvetaeva placed myrtle sprigs on the grave, photographed the tombstone, and sent the prints to other family members.[110] In one of these photographs we find yet another example of how Tsvetaeva used the camera to create a memorial to the dead and the self simultaneously. She captured the image of her shadow on the tombstone in the foreground and inscribed on the reverse of the photo: "2 novembre, Jour des Morts ~ 1938. Cimetiere Montparnasse" (2 November, the Day of the Dead ~ 1938. Montparnasse Cemetery) (figures 2.18–2.19). In recording the act of burying the dead in such a way as to capture her own image in the same frame, Tsvetaeva attests to the fact that she has fulfilled her goal of honoring the dead, while also projecting an awareness of her own mortality.[111]

As theorists of photography suggest, photographic images take on a new and higher significance in the absence of the original subject. As Agamben characterizes it, "In the supreme instant, man, each man, is given over forever to his smallest, most everyday gesture. And yet, thanks to the photographic lens, that gesture is now charged with the weight of an entire life."[112] The small, everyday gestures we encounter in the photographs Tsvetaeva created and contemplated carry with them heavy burdens—in her case, they are the burdens of love and loss. Reconstructing Tsvetaeva's relationship with photography complicates claims that the visual world was of secondary importance in her creative process. As we have seen, photography was an essential part of Tsvetaeva's everyday experience in the world, and this mediated form of vision intertwines with her process of poetic creation. Both poems and photographs function as means of refracting and reflecting the physical

and emotional spaces of mourning, but the true reflection of her experience is conveyed through her poetry. The black-and-white images Tsvetaeva encountered and created prompted the poet to reflect on the nature of self and spirit, inscribing experiences of loss into the space of the snapshot and the lines of a poem.

Figure 2.18. Marina Tsvetaeva's shadow on the gravestone at the Montparnasse Cemetery, 1938. The Efron family grave is in the next row with the nameplate

across it and a bundle of myrtle placed there by Tsvetaeva. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 11901-52, no. 1.

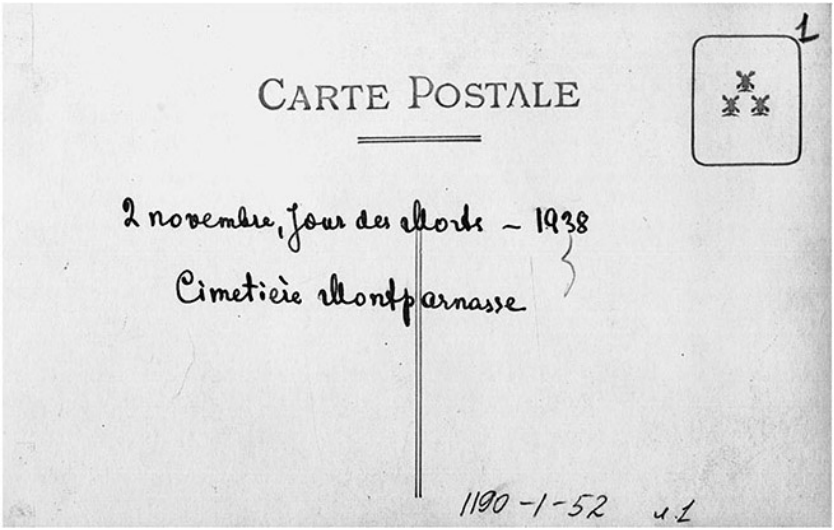


Figure 2.19. Marina Tsvetaeva's inscription on the back of the photograph, "2 November, Day of the Dead, 1938. Montparnasse Cemetery." Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-1-52, no. 1 reverse.

This exploration of Marina Tsvetaeva's poetic relationship to the photographic advances our understanding of the role of the visual world in her process of poetic creation. It also provides a salient point of contrast with the previous chapter's exploration of Pasternak's photo-poetics. These contrasting approaches to "writing the photograph" that we find in Pasternak and Tsvetaeva provide us with a framework for continuing a discussion of the influence of photography on poets of the next Soviet generation. As we move to the poetic world of Joseph Brodsky in the next chapter, we will see mounting evidence of the attraction and tension poets experience in writing with and about photography.

Chapter 3

Framing Memory

Brodsky and Photographic Time

> Brodsky, to a greater extent than anyone else, is a visual poet; his visual apparatus is extremely refined, and therefore it is imperative not to pass over [swallow up] inessential details, but rather to construct from them the enormous world of vision, which comprises Brodsky's external picture, his drawing, and the thing from which we cross over into meaning.
>
> —Evgenii Rein, "Poet o poete"

Having grown up in the post–World War II period, Joseph Brodsky (1940–1996), a poet and the son of a photographer, was even more closely acquainted with photography than Tsvetaeva and Pasternak. His key poetic concerns—time's effects on humans and the way the photograph holds memory in multiple temporal frames—bear a certain resemblance to elements of the photo-poetic experience of Pasternak and Tsvetaeva. But Brodsky's position as a poet of the next generation of writers and one who was expelled from the USSR in 1971 afford him a different attitude toward the photographic, one that is shaped by his deep affinity for writing about memory and loss.

Bengt Jangfeldt refers to Brodsky as a "great poet and a contradictory [*protivorechivyi*] person."[1] Brodksy's critics and readers have also remarked on the inconsistencies and paradoxes that run through Brodsky's poems, essays, and interviews.[2] In considering how photographic motifs operate

in Brodsky's creative world, it becomes readily apparent that this poet's thinking about photography is no less complicated by a variety of contradictory statements concerning the power and limitations of photographic representation. At times Brodsky equates photographs with full and faithful memories, while in other moments the poet expresses his preference for experiencing the world without the mediation of the camera lens. At times it seems that for Brodsky the power of the poetic word is superior to the representational force of the photographic image. In other places, however, photography and poetic writing are described as essentially equivalent generative processes, as if they possess the same capacity for capturing and preserving human experience in the world. Making sense of how photography compares with poetic writing in Brodsky's world as a tool for preserving lived and emotional experiences requires a thorough examination of the place of the photographic in his poetic imagination.

This chapter presents a comprehensive inquiry into photography's place in Brodsky's oeuvre and connects the poet's thinking about photography with his process of poetic creation. Through a close reading of photographic motifs in selected poems and essays, this chapter demonstrates that photographs for this poet have a particular elegiac quality that works in multiple temporal frames. A photograph for Brodsky represents both a backward glance to a time that has been lost, but also a tangible memento that we take with us into the future. Furthermore, it is primarily when the photograph is enhanced by a relationship with text or the poetic word that it assumes a new life. This textual enhancement imbues the photographic image with the power to preserve the past while also holding within itself a narrative of inevitable destruction, disturbance, or death at some point in the future.

More than any other poet discussed in this book, Brodsky conceptualizes a strong analogical relationship between photography and poetic writing. His complicated narratives about the relationship between photographs and memory typically assert that the photographic image becomes powerful and enduring by way of textual mediation. What does this mean, exactly, that textual mediation gives significance to the idea of a photograph? A brief overview suggests that such textual mediation of photographs takes many forms. For instance, we see words distort a photographic image in "Darling I went out . . ." (Dorogaia ia vyshel), a final painful and bitter lyric that Brodsky dedicates to Marina Basmanova (MB), the mother of his son. Brodsky harnesses the space of the poem to degrade Basmanova's image, contrasting what he sees as her intellectual

decline with the physical image from the past. Elsewhere, a photograph of a beloved becomes a surface for writing, though neither text nor image will survive the death of the eponymous hero of the 1978 lyric "Polar Explorer." In interviews, Brodsky compares photographic negatives to discarded drafts of poems, while poems are likened to "photographs of the soul." He describes the project of poetry as a means of capturing the metaphysical qualities of its subject with camera-like precision. At the same time poetic texts can imbibe the characteristics of photographs; his poem about a friend's death takes on the qualities of a black-and-white photograph, while a poem about the loss of Brodsky's sepia-toned former life in Leningrad is titled "A Photograph" in his English auto-translation. In a stanza from *Roman Elegies* (*Rimskie elegii*) Brodsky compares his *exegi monumentum* project to taking photos as a measure of growth and means of extending one's legacy into a future beyond death.

In exploring these junctures where writing and photography encounter one another, the project of making sense of Brodsky's theory of photography and its relationship to his poetic practice has much to do with the ontology of the text, be it visual or verbal. Exploring Brodsky's creative dialogue with photography permits us a firmer grasp on how he understands the nature of texts. We learn from exploring the contours of Brodsky's photographic imagination what poetry is capable of as a verbal, language-based form, in contrast with the visual nature of the photographic medium.

Father's Photographs and Camera Practice

Early in his biography of Brodsky, Lev Losev remarks that "the fact that his eye was trained by the Leica's viewfinder is certainly palpable in his poetry."[3] Brodsky's interest in the medium of photography indeed stems in part from his father's professional work as a photographer.[4] Brodsky's father, Aleksandr Ivanovich Brodsky (1903–84), worked as a photojournalist in the Soviet Navy and later became the officer in charge of the photography section of the Naval Museum in Leningrad. The family converted a small section of their "one and a half" rooms in a communal apartment into a darkroom for his father's work, a fact that Brodsky details in the essay "A Room and a Half": "We had two armoires with full-length mirrors built into their doors and otherwise undistinguished. But they were rather tall, and they did half the job. Around and above them I built the shelves, leaving a narrow opening through which my parents could squeeze into my half, and vice versa. My father resented the

arrangement, particularly since at the farthest end of my half he had built himself a darkroom where he was doing his developing and printing, i.e., where the large part of our livelihood came from."[5] Although Brodsky generally disavows biographical readings of his work, on several occasions he seems to invite the reader to connect biographical details with his interest in photography. For instance, his 1962 narrative poem *Zofia* includes the image of the father repairing a camera, a motif that is repeated several times throughout this early poema. The stanzas below feature a wealth of interrelated optical imagery—spectacles, a mirror, a gleaming needle, and camera lenses—which have the effect of juxtaposing flashes of light with darkness and shadows.

Чуть шелохнулись белые листки.
Мать штопала багровые носки,
отец чинил свой фотоаппарат.
Листал журналы на кровати брат,
а кот на калорифере урчал.
Я галстуки безмолвно изучал.

Царили тишина и полумгла,
ныряла в шерсть блестящая игла,
над ней очки блестели в полумгле,
блестели объективы на столе,
во мраке кот с урчанием дышал,
у зеркала я галстуком шуршал.[6]

The blank pages rustled.
Mother darned the crimson socks,
Father repaired his camera.
Brother flipped through journals on the bed.
And the cat murmured on the radiator.
I quietly studied neckties.

Silence and half-light reigned over all,
a shiny needle dove into the wool,
above it spectacles twinkled in the half-light,
and the camera lenses sparkled on the table,
in the gloom the cat purred,
And I rustled a necktie before the mirror.

In an interview with Birgitt Fait, Brodsky acknowledges the importance of

the "visual plane" (zritel'nii plan) in his creative process, recognizing both his father's profession and the broader geometric lessons he derived from the city of his birth as formative elements of his interest in the visual world.

> BF: It seems to me that the visual plane (architecture, etc.) plays a very important role in your poems.
> JB: That's possible. You know, when you talk about that, I flinch because, well . . . nevermind . . .
> . . .
> BF: It's apparent that you have a keen eye for architecture. Perhaps this highly developed sense of visual perception has something to do with your father's profession?
> JB: Of course, my father's profession plays a part in this. You could probably even attribute it to something genetic. But I think that it's more about the city in which I was raised. Petersburg teaches you to measure, it teaches you composition.[7]

Losev suggests that tension between father and son is palpable in Brodsky's unfinished, unpublished 1964 poem "Fotograf sredi korablei" ("Photographer among the Ships"), the title of which refers once again to his father's work as a Naval photographer.[8] Losev notes that this text was written at a significant turning point in the relationship of father and son; it was at this time that Brodsky began to try to understand his father, and his father not only actively worked to protect and defend his son from political persecution, but he also began to recognize his poetic vocation as something worthy of respect and admiration. Though Brodsky's relationship with his father was strained at times, Aleksandr Brodsky instructed his son in the practice of taking photographs, and the younger Brodsky worked as a photographer at various points in his young adulthood.[9] He created photo-essays for a Leningrad children's magazine and later earned money working as a photographer while serving his hard labor sentence in Norenskaia (see figures 3.1 and 3.2).[10] More important for our purpose is the way that Brodsky's interest in photography shaped his thinking about time and poetic expression.

Double Exposure: Photography as Entrapment, Photography as Freedom

In *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym's reading of the place of the

photograph in Brodsky's artistic consciousness draws attention to a paradox present in the poet's thinking about photography.[11] She notes, on the one hand, that Brodsky scorns the irony of tourist photography; he is repelled by the practice of trading lived experience for a series of photographic snapshots. On the other hand, he is drawn to photography's relationship to memory and, in particular, to positioning memory in multiple temporal frameworks. Boym argues that Brodsky is attracted to photography's nurturing of individual freedom of expression, but that he is also "critical of the photographic quick fix (the formula of contemporary tourism)." On Brodsky's dual thinking about the photographic image, Boym writes: "The photographic double exposure exemplifies the exile's double consciousness. Brodsky is at once suspicious of the photographic entrapment of the experience, as in the tourist formula 'Kodak ergo sum,' and fascinated with

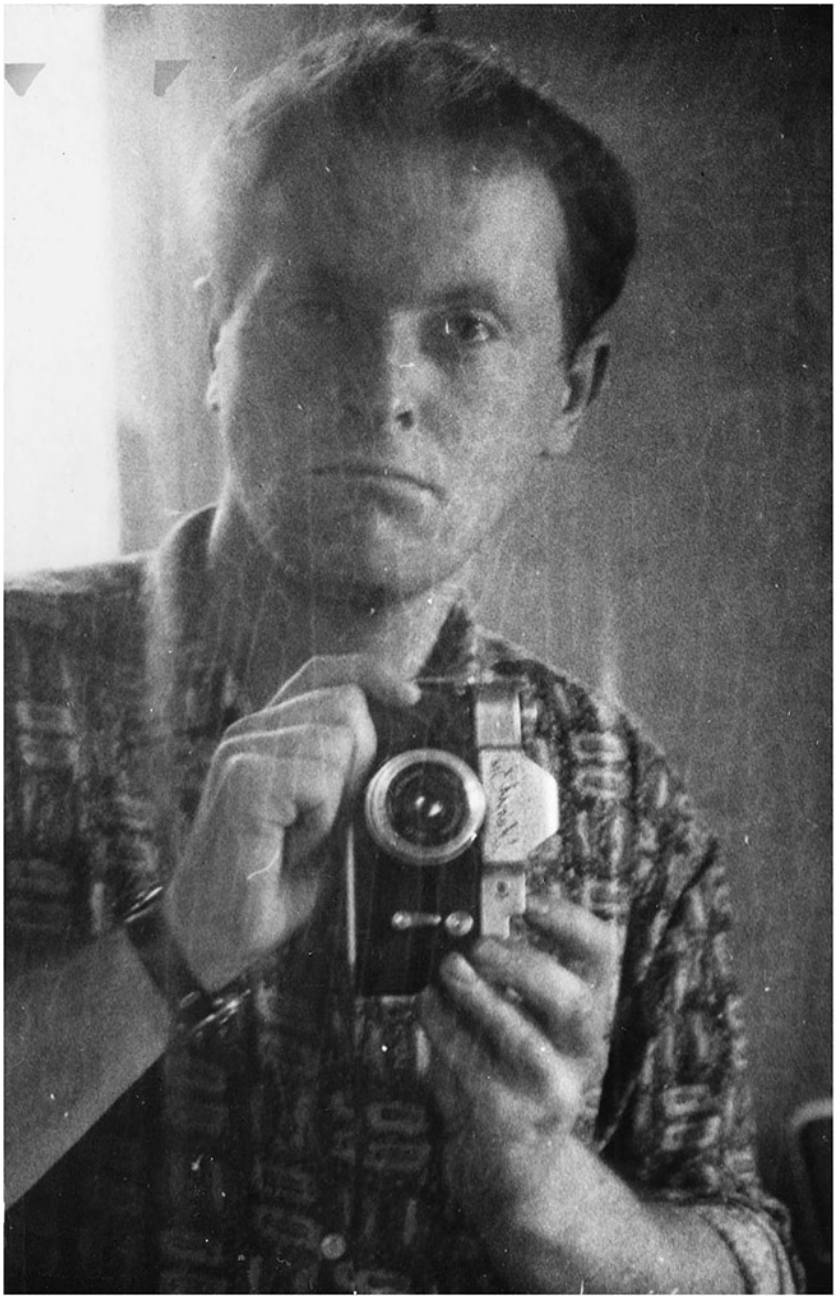


Figure 3.1. Joseph Brodsky's self-portrait with camera in Norenskaia exile, c. 1964. Image courtesy of the Joseph Brodsky papers of the Katilius family, Stanford University.

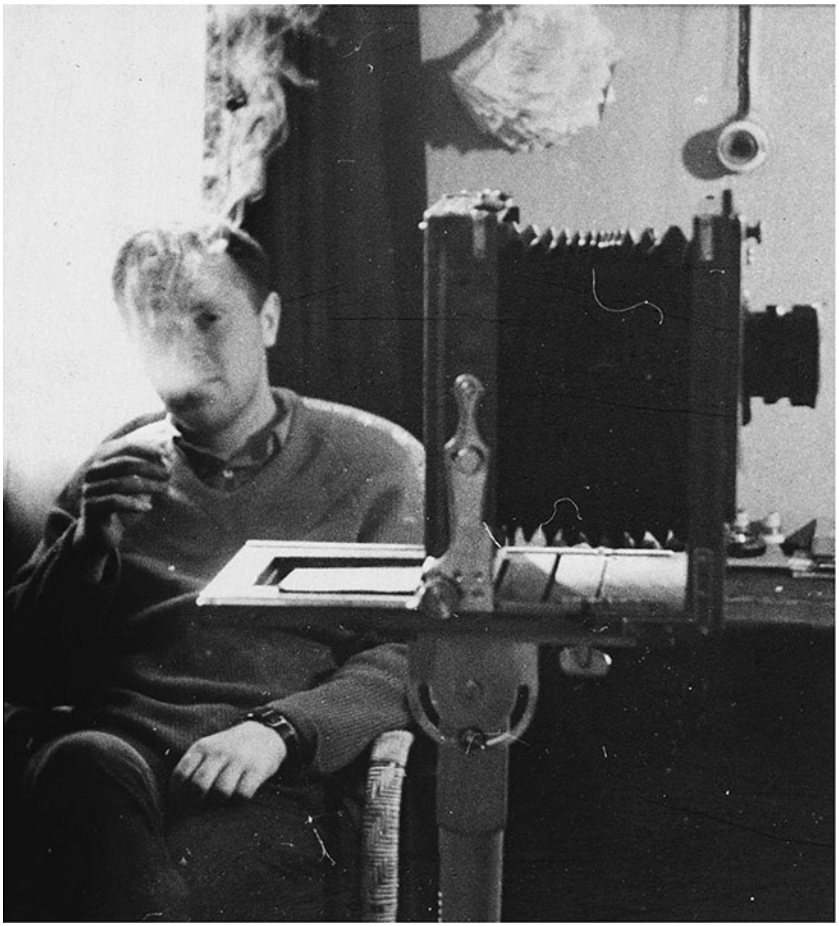


Figure 3.2. Joseph Brodsky seated at a photo atelier where he worked during his exile in Norenskaia, c. 1964. Image courtesy of the Joseph Brodsky papers of the Katilius family, Stanford University.

the visual aspects of life that help to estrange ideological and collective clichés. Moreover, Brodsky often describes his own craft in photographic terms."[12]

Boym does not elaborate here on the poet's suspicious attitude toward the photograph, but Brodsky's negative view of the culturally pervasive "Kodak ergo sum" notion is evident from a number of quotations—in verse, interviews, and essays—which convey an emotional response to tourist photography that ranges from pity to scorn. For example, take the melancholic line from one of the poet's most well-known texts, his 1961 "Christmas Romance" (Rozhdestvenskii romans), which offers its own

snapshot of the lonely, alienated, photographing tourist:

> Плывет в тоске необъяснимой
> пчелиный хор сомнамбул, пьяниц.
> В ночной столице фотоснимок
> печально сделал иностранец,
> и выезжает на Ордынку
> такси с больными седоками,
> и мертвецы стоят в обнимку
> с особняками.[13]

> There floats in an abiding gloom
> A drone of bees: men drink, asleep.
> In the dark capital a lone
> tourist takes another snap.
> Now out onto Ordynka turns
> a taxicab, with sickly faces;
> dead men lean into the arms
> of the low houses.[14]

In an interview in the documentary film *And My Path Stretches through This City* (I liazhet put′ moi cherez etot gorod; 2000), which follows Brodsky in Venice, the poet-traveler explains his preference for experiencing a new place without technological enhancement or distraction:

> I remember walking around [Venice] and it was flooded, so there was water up to my knees. I didn't know where anything was and I didn't use a guide because, I don't know, I'm just allergic to that sort of thing. You know, I guess it's both correct and incorrect—it makes sense to have a guide to have some sort of sense of where you are. But it always seemed to me that it was better . . . well, you know, it's the same reason it's unpleasant to carry around a camera, how unpleasant it is to be a tourist. Well, it's not that being a tourist is bad, it's just that isn't it better to record it all on your retina [*na setchatke*] than on film [*nezheli na plenke*]?[15]

Although Brodsky betrays here his distaste for tourist photographs, the images are associated with precise and faithful memories in many of his writings that reference the medium.[16] In *Watermark*, his long essay on Venice, Brodsky draws attention to a particular quality of light in the Italian city and the way it demands depiction. Though he makes clear that

the eye is the better lens, Brodsky nonetheless reaches for his camera. This passage argues by extension that the photographic image is preferable to memory since memory is faulty and malleable in a way that a fixed photographic image is not.

> The winter light in this city! It has the extraordinary property of enhancing your eye's power of resolution to the point of microscopic precision—the pupil, especially when it is of the gray or mustard-and-honey variety, humbles any Hasselblad lens and develops your subsequent memories to a *National Geographic* sharpness. . . . In the morning this light breasts [*sic*] your windowpane and, having pried your eye open like a shell, runs ahead of you, strumming its lengthy rays—like a hot-footed schoolboy running his stick along the iron grate of a park or garden—along arcades, colonnades, red-brick chimneys, saints, and lions. "Depict! Depict!" it cries to you, either mistaking you for some Canaletto or Carpaccio or Guardi, or because it doesn't trust your retina's ability to retain what it makes available, not to mention your brain's capacity to absorb it. Perhaps the latter explains the former. Perhaps they are synonymous. Perhaps art is simply an organism's reaction against its retentive limitations. At any rate, you obey the command and grab your camera, supplementing both your brain cells and your pupil.[17]

How then to resolve the paradox identified by Boym and seen in these passages about Venice, with photography being a poor substitute for life, on the one hand, and a superior substitute for memory on the other? I would suggest that photographic images in Brodsky's creative world trump memory only in those instances where such images are mediated by words, in poetry or in prose. As in Marina Tsvetaeva's photo-poetic system, the photographic image signals death, yet the image can achieve victory over time and memory by remaining dynamic through the power of language. If the image is mediated by words—of poetry, prose, or even a simple caption—it can propel the experience captured in the image into multiple temporal zones: the past of the image, but also its present and future incarnations.

Boym cites another example of the intertwining of memory and photograph in a passage from "In a Room and a Half " in which Brodsky recalls talking with his father about World War II while his father photographed a Marine brass ensemble playing at a local park bandstand.

Tellingly, the scene is rendered by Brodsky in such a way that narrative (textual production) and the process of taking photographs (image production) collide in a space that evokes death and destruction:

> We'd stopped before the wooden pavilion in which the Marine Brass Band was playing old waltzes: he wanted to take some pictures of this band. What marble statues loomed here and there, smeared with leopard-cum-zebra patterns of shadows, people were shuffling along on the gravel, children shrieked by the pond, and we were talking about the war and the Germans. Staring at the brass band, I found myself asking him which concentration camps in his view were worse: the Nazis' or ours. "As for myself," came the reply, "I'd rather be burned at the stake at once than die a slow death and discover a meaning in the process." Then he proceeded to snap pictures.[18]

Boym contrasts this memory with Susan Sontag's reading of the photograph as an "active promoter of nostalgia," arguing that this passage is constructed in a way that defies predictable Barthesian readings of a photograph as a fixed image evocative of the finality of death. Instead, by juxtaposing the written text of a remembered conversation with the montage of his father's picture-taking Brodsky achieves the depiction of a memory that breaks the temporal expectation of a static, frozen image of the past. Boym explains:

> Brodsky commemorates his father in their shared moment of conversation and picture taking. The passage has the punctuated rhythm of pictures being snapped, yet the father takes his pictures quickly, while the poet-son lets them develop slowly, in the darkroom of memory. . . . Brodsky disrupts the photographic art. Instead of worshiping the existing image of his father, he produces a series of imaginary pictures, turning a photograph into a film about a photographer. Instead of a static memento mori, Brodsky searches for the alternative route to freedom for his parents, through his own texts in the foreign language.[19]

As I showed in chapter 1, Pasternak employed a similar technique of using the poetic word to animate photographic images to capture with documentary precision both natural and historical experience. Boym suggests, however, that Brodsky does so for a different reason: dynamic forms of memory imitate freedom. Brodsky himself expresses a similar

idea about the connection between photography and freedom in "In a Room and a Half," in which he associates water—a key geographical element of his beloved cities St. Petersburg and Venice—with the photographic process, and as a symbol of freedom. This association with water—as an element of the developing process for photos and as a metaphor for freedom—is built on an understanding of the flow of water as a forward-moving force in space and time. "[My father] liked to be near the water, he adored the sea. In that country, this is the closest one gets to freedom. Even looking at it is sometimes enough, and he looked at it, and photographed it, for most of his life."[20] In two other interviews, the image of water becomes the subject of his father's photographs and solidifies his conception of metaphorical links between photography, water, and freedom.

> I love water more than anything in the whole world. My father was a professional photographer and the greater part of his life was connected with maritime journals, and I loved it so much when water appeared in developed pictures . . . I saw water not only with my own eyes, but also with his eyes, and even through the eye of the camera.[21]

> My father worked for many years as a photographer in the Baltic fleet. In addition, I too became a photographer in this fleet. But that's not the main thing. The thing is, for him, and for its own sake, I developed heaps and heaps of his photographs. And in these images, of course, there was always water—these little wrinkles of water, see? And just as that meant something for him, it was, thanks to him, important for me. That is, the water—all of that maritime stuff.[22]

Water is associated with the photographic developing process and, because photography and memory are so closely joined in Brodsky's work, this developing process becomes a metaphor for capturing and retaining memories. "Maybe it's because you are a son of a photographer and your memory simply develops a film. Shot with your own two eyes almost forty years ago. That's why you couldn't wink back then."[23] Brodsky is drawn to water not only for its association with photography, but also because of the way that the flow of water is connected with the flow of time and time's relationship to memory. The fact that water operates as a metaphor for time is evident in Brodsky's writing that

relates the movement of water to the ebb and flow of time.

> I always adhered to the idea that God is time, or at least His spirit is. Perhaps this idea was even of my own manufacture, but now I don't remember. In any case, I always thought that if the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water, the water was bound to reflect it. Hence my sentiment for water, for its folds, wrinkles, and ripples, and—as I am a Northerner—for its grayness. I simply think that water is the image of time, and every New Year's Eve, in somewhat pagan fashion, I try to find myself near water, preferably near a sea or an ocean, to watch the emergence of a new helping, a new cupful of time from it. I am not looking for a naked maiden riding on a shell; I am looking for either a cloud or a crest of a wave hitting the shore at midnight. That, to me, is time coming out of water.[24]

It is also significant that in the same passage Brodsky writes of a desire to be near water to mark the coming of a new year since he also marked the passing of a year by writing poetry and taking annual photographs. In discussing his tradition of writing a poem every year at Christmas—his Nativity poems (Rozhdestvenskie stikhi)—the poet sees each poem as a marker in time and a reflection of the way the passage of time shapes a person and his art.[25] In an interview he compared it to taking annual photographs, something that his father did every year, even after Brodsky immigrated to the United States (figures 3.3 and 3.4): "I have seven or eight Nativity poems. It's sort of a form of discipline . . . Like a man who takes a photo of himself every year in order to see what he looks like. It seems to me that this way, you can more or less follow your stylistic development—the growth of the soul in some sense. In other words, these Nativity poems are something like photographs of the soul. Unfortunately, a huge mass of negatives are lost. [*Laughs*.]"[26] We see here the way that a photograph for Brodsky functions not simply as a historical time marker, but a milepost by which we judge our development in the future tense. Here is yet another example of a poet conjuring the idea of a "photograph of the soul," a notion that each poet featured in this study conceives of in a different way. For Brodsky, writing poetry functions in a similar way to taking photographs; just as the poet's lyrics will serve as his eternal monument for future generations, he invokes the medium of photography here for its similar testamentary value and as a measure of personal and artistic growth.

Returning to the notion of Brodsky's metaphor for the passage of time, we find that water operates as a developing solution for memory in "A Guide to a Renamed City," the poet's 1979 homage to Leningrad. The essay addresses some elements of Leningrad/Petersburg history and mythology and draws on photographic and cinematic imagery in several places. The poet memorializes his beloved city through a mode of writing ekphrastically suggestive of photography, which solidifies the notion of photograph as memory. A central photo-poetic theme that also reemerges here is the relationship between water, time, and the photographic process. In the essay, water is linked to notions of freedom (in this case, freedom to recall) that Brodsky associates with the water, reflection and mirroring that he finds in all corners of the city. The essay opens with an epigraph from Susan Sontag's *On Photography*: "To possess the world in the form of images is, precisely, to reexperience the unreality and remoteness of the real."[27]

Figure 3.3. Joseph Brodsky on a Leningrad apartment balcony with a view of the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii cathedral, 1956. Courtesy of the M. I. Mil'chik archive.

In the epigraph's original context in Sontag's essay, she too is considering the use of photographic motifs in a literary text; Sontag writes about photography's function in the works of Marcel Proust. Her larger point here—and

Figure 3.4. Joseph Brodsky's parents on their Leningrad apartment balcony with a view of the Spaso-Preobrazhenskii cathedral, 1980s. Courtesy of Joseph Brodsky Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 613, Box 154, Folder 3451.

this is something that is of concern to both Brodsky and Pasternak—is the

problem of the relationship between photographic image and the experience of reality. Sontag argues that photographs provide us with a tangible relationship with the signified, but that this perception of closeness to reality is an illusion. She writes:

> Photographs are a way of imprisoning reality . . . , of making it stand still. Or they enlarge a reality that is felt to be shrunk, hollowed out, perishable, remote. One can't possess reality, one can possess (and be possessed by) images—as, according to Proust . . . one can't possess the present but one can possess the past. . . . While the Proustian labors presuppose that reality is distant, photography implies instant access to the real. But the results of this practice of instant access are another way of creating distance. To possess the world in the form of images is, precisely, to reexperience the unreality and remoteness of the real.[28]

The relationship between the indexicality of photographs and their problematic connection to real-world experience, as articulated here by Sontag, is reminiscent of Pasternak's concern with the illusion of photography's faithful representation of reality. Brodsky's engagement with photographic imagery in "A Guide to a Renamed City" is similar to Pasternak's attempts to harness photographic technology to preserve a moment in a state of dynamic motion. In "Guide," Brodsky does not refer to actual photographic images but uses photographic metaphors and analogies to recall Petersburg—its history and its place in Russian cultural memory—in an evolving, dynamic form. Brodsky's Petersburg is filled with beautiful and troubling reflections and mirrored images. He connected water to photography as a way of reflecting—indeed, developing—his visual memories: "Reflected every second by thousands of square feet of running silver amalgam, it's as if the city were constantly being filmed by its river, which discharges its footage into the Gulf of Finland, which on a sunny day, looks like a depository of these blinding images."[29] This metaphor breaks moving pictures down into a series of still images, yet they continue to flow, archived in the free space of the sea, another realm that represents both permanence and impermanence. Brodsky also uses the properties of still photography to construct an analogy that suggests that Petersburg somehow seemed to be preserved from the carnage that tore apart most Russian cities during wartime: "As the country, with its capital returned to Moscow, retreated to its womblike, claustrophobic, xenophobic condition, Petersburg, having

nowhere to withdraw to, came to a standstill—as though photographed in its 19th century posture."[30]

For Brodsky, photographs have not only a past but also a future life. Photography operates fluidly in multiple temporal spaces. We see here how history catches up to this image of Petersburg frozen in its nineteenth-century pose; after the siege of Leningrad, the page of the album turns, and the picture of the city looks older—time has taken its toll: "The city suddenly looked much older; it was as though History had finally acknowledged its existence and decided to catch up with this place in her usual morbid way: by piling up bodies. Today, 33 years later . . . the ceilings and facades of this unconquered city still seem to preserve the stain-like imprints of its inhabitants' last gasps and last gazes."[31] The shadows and shades of Blockade victims seem to cling like a trace layered on to the previous photographs. We sense here a shift from the Pasternakian fluidity and flow of photo-poetic time to something that more closely resembles Marina Tsvetaeva's elegiac photo-poetic system. If Pasternak's photo-poetics enable a kind of visual and temporal renewal and the possibility of holding a moment or an image in a continually evolving space, for Tsvetaeva and Brodsky the photograph represents an elegiac backward glance to a fixed time that they cannot recover or revise. Brodsky's figuring of the photographic image as a nostalgic memento mori enables him to engage the photograph in a new way and envision it in present and future incarnations. Despite the creative potential to return to the past, the shadow of Brodsky's exile—and the real-world impossibility of returning to his homeland—is an ever-present shadow hovering around texts that engage the photographic in elegiac fashion.

A Future in the Photo Frame: Photography as a Mode of Mourning

In their essay "Notes on Love and Photography," Eduardo Cadava and Paola Cortes-Rocca write of the palpable sense of absence that arises from visually confronting a moment from the past captured in a photograph. They also articulate a concept of critical importance for understanding Brodsky's particular interest in photography and its relationship to time: the photograph's potential to contain multiple temporalities. They write, "It is this ghostly survival—as a metonym for all such survivals—that defines the madness of the photograph, since it is there, within the medium of photography, that we simultaneously experience the absence

of the 'observed subject' and the fact of its 'having-been-there,' the relation between life and death, between testimony and its impossibility, between the self and an other, and among the past, the present, and the future."[32] Brodsky's writing on the past, present, and future of the image, is revealed in a story from his biography that illustrates one of the central defining principles of his photo-poetics: for this poet, the photographic image speaks not only of the past, but suggests a "future tense" of the image, a principle not unlike what Barthes, Sontag, and others have suggested about the photograph's function as memento mori, that is, its fore-shadowing of future death.

Just days before he left the Soviet Union in 1972, Brodsky presented his close friends Liudmila and Viktor Shtern with a photograph of himself (figure 3.5), taken at an airport in Yakutsk more than a decade earlier, in 1959.[33] As Liudmila Shtern recounts in her memoirs of Brodsky, the brief note he wrote on the back read: "An airport where I will never again land. Do not mourn."[34]

Using a photograph of a frozen moment from the past, taken more than a decade earlier, Brodsky's caption makes a prediction about the future: he will not step foot on Russian soil again. His request that his friends not mourn brings to mind notions of death and the irretrievable loss that came with emigration. Most important, this example draws together problems of time, image, and death, themes that recur Brodsky's interactions with photographic texts.

The notion that photographs speak to the passage of time is reflected in Brodsky's use of photographic motifs in his writing and also echoes the poet's oft-quoted central concern in his art: "What interests me most of all, has always interested me, on this earth . . . is time and the effect it has on man, how it changes him, grinds away at him."[35] In "In Memory of Professor Braudo" (Pamiati Professora Braudo), a 1970 poem written in memory of Leningrad organist and musicologist Isaiah Aleksandrovich Braudo (1896–1970), death—in the form of snow—is figured as a kind of tourist, meandering through the city, taking a photograph as it also takes a life. The natural setting—gray, wintry March in Leningrad—itself becomes the medium for death's black-and-white photograph, and the speaker notes that this two-toned vision is well suited for depicting death.

Март—черно-белый месяц, и зренье в марте
приспособляется легче к изображенью смерти;
снег, толчея колес, и поднимает ворот
бредущий за фотоснимком, едущим через город.[36]

March is a black-and-white month, and one's vision in March
adapts itself more easily to a depiction of death;
the snow, the crush of the wheels, lifts the gate
wandering in search of a photo that speeds through the city.

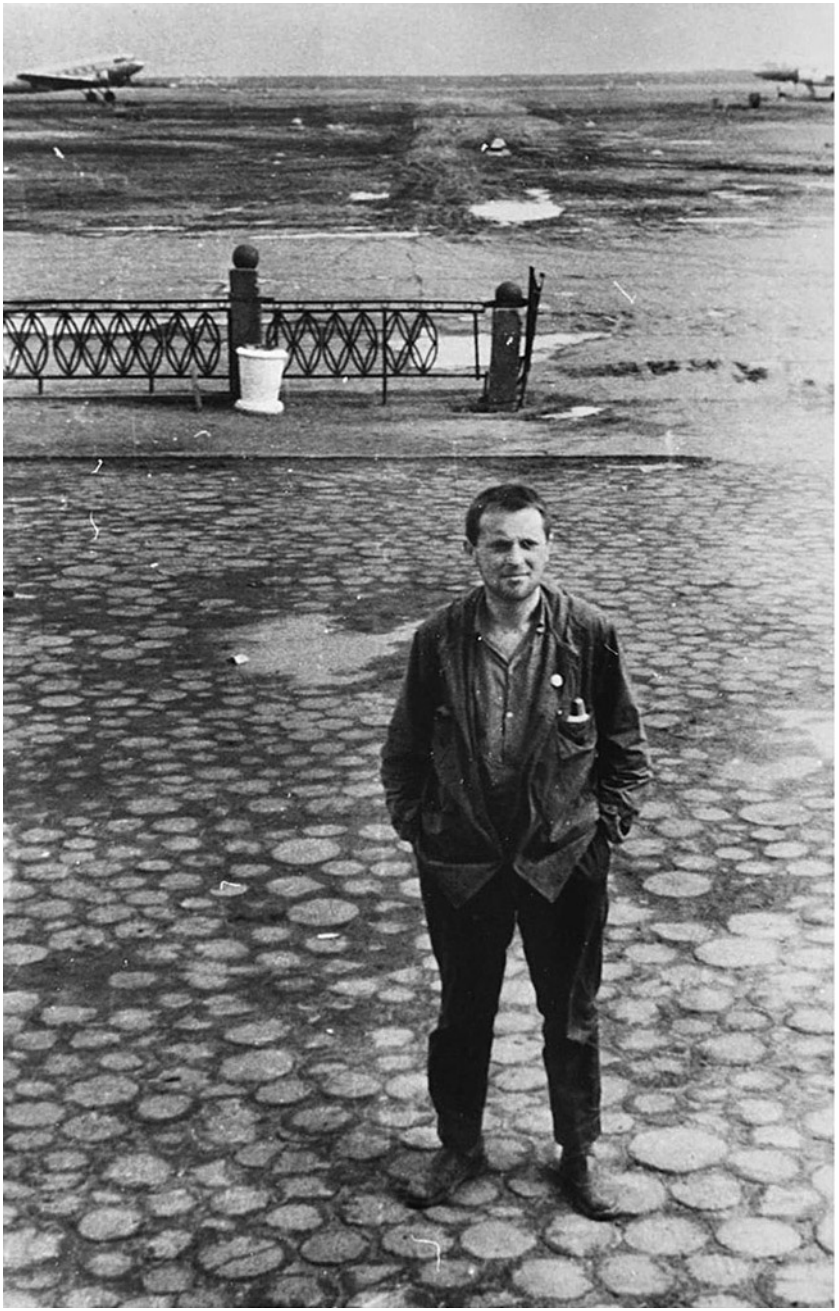


Figure 3.5. Joseph Brodsky at an airport in Yakutsk, 1959. Joseph Brodsky Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, GEN MSS 613, Box 143, Folder 3181.

Brodsky's use of the photographic image to convey the fluidity of time is akin to Pasternak's photo-poetics, whereas the closeness of photographic images to themes of death in Brodsky's writing invites comparison to Tsvetaeva's invocation of the medium in her elegiac writings. To a certain extent, the photograph for Brodsky, like the poetic word, is marked by an elegiac quality that encourages self-reflection and self-portraiture. A salient example of the photograph's function as memento mori is found in another of Brodsky's essays in which he reflects on a photograph of Auden. The final essay of his collection *On Grief and Reason* is a eulogy to the English poets W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender, figures Brodsky closely associates with his development as a poet. Brodsky met both Auden and Spender in London in 1972. Auden died the following year in September 1973, while Spender passed away in 1995, a year before Brodsky's death. A photograph of the smiling Auden provides a point of departure for Brodsky's remembrance of the role these English poets played in his new life in the West.[37] "As I write this, I look at a photograph taken there that day: Stephen is saying something funny to Wystan, who laughs heartily back . . . Ah, this unbearable snapshot of laughter! That's what one is left with—with these arrested instants stolen from life without any anticipation of the far greater theft ahead that will render your hoard the source of utter despair. A hundred years ago one would be spared at least that."[38] Brodsky, in characteristic elegiac accent, bemoans the casualness of snapshot photographs, which can capture joyous moments, but—as Sontag, Barthes, and others have written—simultaneously prefigure death and loss. The emotional charge of this passage—the violence and anguish connoted in the words "unbearable," "arrested," "stolen from life," "far greater theft"—is derived not from the pleasant memory of that joyful moment, but from the poignancy of the loss the poet has suffered and the anticipation of his death. In Brodsky's world, photographs live on into the future and are experienced and re-experienced in different ways as time moves ever forward. Whether it is the photograph of Brodsky at the Yakutsk airport or the picture of the smiling Auden, the juxtaposition of text and image wrests the moment from its static, frozen past, and transforms it into a dynamic and evolving memory-space.

Sanna Turoma opens her book, *Brodsky Abroad: Empire, Tourism, Nostalgia* (2010), with the description of a scene from the documentary film *Joseph Brodsky: A Maddening Space* (1991), in which the filmmaker asks Brodsky to comment on a series of photographs from his earlier life in Russia.[39] This passage provides further evidence of the way Brodsky's

thoughts on photography almost immediately turn to the future of the image and the way that it operates as a locus for reflections on mortality. The lines in brackets are my description of the photographs pictured in the film that Brodsky looks at as he narrates.

> [Photo: Brodsky seated on a suitcase outside the Pulkovo airport on a sunny day.]
> JB: It's on the eve of departure from Russia. Well, not on the eve, but just some 35 or 40 minutes before.
> [Photo: Brodsky writing on paper, with a line of friends sitting in the background (figure 3.6)]
> JB: I suppose that's the same. Those are a few of the people who came to see me leaving the country.
> [Photo: Group portrait of friends who saw Brodsky off, in his apartment after his departure]
> JB: Those are—I know that for a fact—those are the friends of mine, when, the day I left, they returned from the airport and broke into my place. And here they are. Well, it's my room. With the exception of one, they are all blissfully alive.
> Interviewer: I believe you are now being read by the current generation. I was wondering how you see yourself in terms of your reader-ship in Russia . . .
> . . .
> (*Brodsky acknowledges here that he is being read by the current generation, but it is not that important to him.)*
> JB: Basically, it's these people that—well, I'm getting maudlin—who are in this picture. Well, I don't know what you see in it, but what I see in it, well, is . . . it's a little tragedy happening. It's almost a wake.
> Interviewer: Can you imagine going back there?
> JB: Not really. Well, Archimedes was right, in many ways. You can't step twice into the same current.[40] Nor do I think you can step twice onto the same asphalt. There is no way to repair it. It happened. I don't really care what the new generation thinks . . . I would be pleased . . . if it would make them more resilient or more obstinate . . . But my sentiment is for the people in this picture, who will never be the same, and to whom I will never be back in the way they knew me.[41]

This series of photographs underscored for Brodsky the fact that his

departure from Russia was, whether he knew it at the time or not, an irreversible

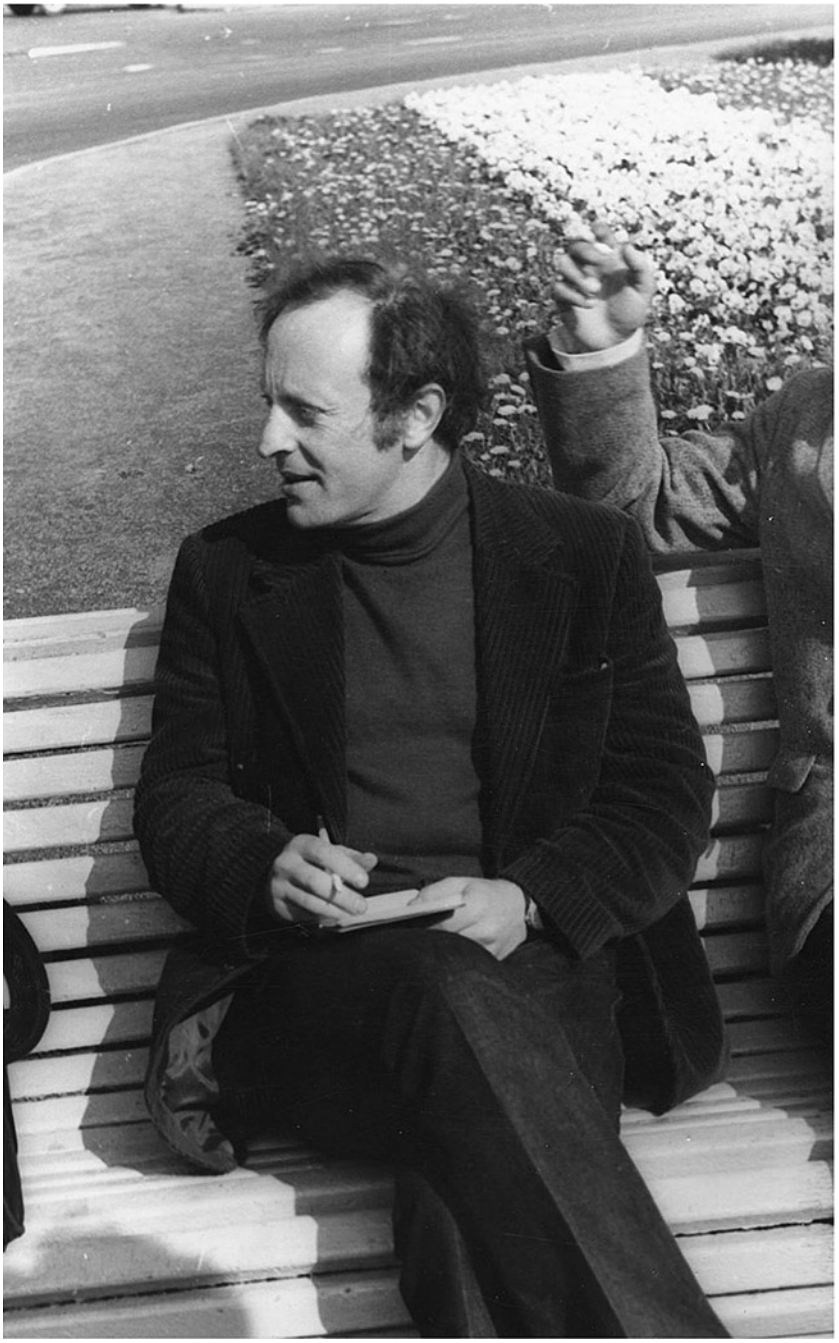


Figure 3.6. Brodsky at Pulkovo airport before leaving the USSR permanently. June 4, 1972. Courtesy of the Joseph Brodsky Papers of the Katilius Family, Stanford

one. His reading of the photograph of his friends in his apartment shortly after his departure is one of tragedy, one of mourning on the level of lamenting a death ("it's almost a wake").

Valentina Polukhina suggests that Brodsky's work demonstrates a consistent theme of "after the end": "after the end of love, after the end of life in Russia, after the end of Christianity."[42] Following Polukhina, Sergei Kuznetsov—citing poems such as "New Life" (Novaia zhizn′) and the *Centaurs* cycle—adds "a new life after catastrophe" to this list of thematic "after-lives" that occupy much of Brodsky's work devoted to the passage of time and its effects on humans.[43] Consistent with his orientation toward the afterlife of an image, Brodsky employs photographic themes in several of these works about the future after a tragic event. Life following the tragedy of exile is at the center of his 1989 poem "Dorogaia ia vyshel . . ." ("Darling, I went out . . ."), called "Brise Marine" in Brodsky's auto-translation, in which the poet recalls details of his former life with his beloved and their subsequent separation:

> . . . потом сошлась с инженером-химиком
> и, судя по письмам, чудовищно поглупела.[44]

> . . . but later alloyed with a chemical
> engineer and, judging by letters, grew fairly stupid.[45]

Despite the bitter memories, the poet writes that he has made a clean break from her, and that the afterlife he has endured following his separation from her and from his homeland has allowed him to move on, to free himself from these stagnant memories:

> Не пойми меня дурно: с твоим голосом, телом, именем
> ничего уже больше не связано. Никто их не уничтожил,
> но забыть одну жизнь человеку нужна, как минимум,
> еще одна жизнь. И я эту долю прожил.[46]

> Understand me correctly, though: your body, your warble, your middle name
> now stir practically nothing. Not that they've ceased to burgeon;
> but to forget one life, a man needs at minimum
> one more life. And I've done that portion.[47]

Brodsky refers to a photograph in the line that follows, acknowledging that in some sense the beloved will remain in his memory, frozen in her former, younger state.

> Повезло и тебе: где еще, кроме разве что фотографии,
> ты пребудешь всегда без морщин, молода, весела, глумлива?
> Ибо время, столкнувшись с памятью, узнает о своем бесправии.[48]

> You got lucky as well: where else, save in a snapshot perhaps,
> will you forever remain free of wrinkles, lithe, caustic, vivid?
> Having bumped into memory, time learns its impotence.[49]

Kuznetsov suggests that the juxtaposition of text and image is central here too. He writes, "the 'letters' of the second stanza, as witness to the changes which the heroine has undergone, seem to create a contrasting pair to the 'photographs' of the fifth stanza, the faded memories."[50]

The photograph's ability to preserve a memory and lend an individual a certain degree of immortality—in this case the beloved is preserved as an image of eternal youth—resonates with a similar sentiment the poet expressed to Ramunas and Elia Katilius, his Lithuanian friends, in a handwritten piece of verse in English that is housed in their archive, and in photocopy in the Brodsky Papers at Yale:

> In wrinkled time whose minutes make the hour
> you who forget and me who loves
> We no become [*sic*] more beautiful but our old photographs. [*sic*][51]

Though the English grammar of this impromptu lyric is imperfect, Brodsky ironically subverts the image of fading photographs by situating the photographic image in inverse proportion to the fading beauty that accompanies old age. The first lines claim a fluid, nonlinear relationship between time and man, while the subsequent lines suggest that time operates in strange ways, rubbing out memory, but preserving emotion. At the same time, still photographs assume new significance in the wake of faded beauty and in the midst of the aging process. It is not we who become more beautiful, Brodsky insists, it is the photographs from the past that take on new expressive powers as time bends forward.

Returning to "Darling I went out . . ." the suggestion of the penultimate line ("Having bumped into memory, time learns its impotence") seems to convey the reverse: that memory can be more powerful than the destructive effects of time. The difference in Brodsky's

postexile condition is that this exile keeps him from encountering later images of Basmanova that would testify to the destructive forces of time. In this protected place, the beloved remains fragmented but not forgotten in the poet's album-space of memory.[52] The poem's final, detached line brings us back once again to this seaside setting in which water symbolizes memory and the passage of time.

> Я курю в темноте и вдыхаю гнилье отлива.[53]
> Ebb tide; I smoke in the darkness and inhale rank seaweed.[54]

The memories, like the tide, have receded and grown unpleasant, while the photograph extends a false promise of preserving youth and happier times.

The means by which Brodsky works to reconcile the pain and pleasure of remembering and the temporal paradoxes of photographic seeing by ascribing text to an image are the focus of the following analysis. At times the poet achieves this quite literally by captioning photographic images, while in other places he draws together text and image by writing "photographically."

Writing the Photograph: Intersections of Text and Image

One of the tensions unfolding in Brodsky's writing on photography is the idea of multiple temporalities for the photographic image and the way it resonates with the multiple time frames in which poetic language exists. Brodsky is concerned not only with the past of the image (i.e., the moment the shutter clicks) but also with how the image moves and changes—not in a physical way, for the image on the photograph is fixed—but in the way that we interact with and "read" the photographic text over time. This tension between permanence and impermanence is a key part of photo-poetics; photographs are thought to freeze a moment from the past to which we cannot return, while also preserving this moment in a tangible form, converting it into an image-object to which we can physically or mentally return. Brodsky's analogy about water as a condensed form of time expresses a similar notion of fluidity and fixity; water, like a photograph, can be regarded as having permanence and impermanence, fixity and flow.[55] In this sense, the poetic text also has fixed materiality, and is also subject to a complicated relationship with time. In his Nobel lecture Brodsky articulated the complex relationship

between the urge to write poetry, the poet's place in the continuum of language, and the materiality of the text:

> A person sets out to write a poem for a variety of reasons: to win the heart of his beloved; to express his attitude toward the reality surrounding him, be it a landscape or a state; to capture his state of mind at a given instant; to leave—as he thinks at that moment—a trace on the earth. He resorts to this form—the poem most likely for unconsciously mimetic reasons: the black vertical clot of words on the white sheet of paper presumably reminds him of his own situation in the world, of the balance between space and his body. But regardless of the reasons for which he takes up the pen, and regardless of the effect produced by what emerges from beneath that pen on his audience—however great or small it may be—the immediate consequence of this enterprise is the sensation of coming into direct contact with language or, more precisely, the sensation of immediately falling into dependence on it, on everything that has already been uttered, written, and accomplished in it.[56]

Brodsky was enthusiastically dedicated to the postcard genre, which speaks in part to his interest in the direct merging of text and image that postcards afford. His archives contain not only dozens of postcards he sent to friends from across the world but also written poetry in the form of jovial notes on imagined postcards.[57] But beyond explicit writings on picture postcards, several of Brodsky's texts conjure the image of a photograph that comes into direct contact with writing. A key example of this is his 1977 poem "Polar Explorer" (Poliarnyi issledovatel') in which the arctic explorer—dying of starvation and gangrene—whose diary is completely full, uses photographs of his wife and sister to scratch out in writing the final lines of the account of his adventures:

> Все собаки съедены. В дневнике
> не осталось чистой страницы.
> И бисер слов покрывает фото супруги, к ее щеке
> мушку даты сомнительной приколов.
> Дальше—снимок сестры. Он не щадит сестру:
> речь идет о достигнутой широте![58]

> All the huskies are eaten. There is no space
> left in the diary. And the beads of quick

words scatter over his spouse's sepia-shaded face
adding the date in question like a mole to her lovely cheek.
Next, the snapshot of his sister. He doesn't spare his kin:
what's been reached is the highest possible latitude![59]

The word reigns supreme here, as it impinges on the images of the explorer's kin. The lexicon used to describe the way the words take over the image—as beading and a beauty spot—connote decorative qualities that might be said to enhance the image. At the same time, the poem destabilizes time in creating its visual-textual palimpsest. The explorer experiences cold- and hunger-induced madness, and the beauty spot affixed to the beloved's cheek is called a "dubious date" (somnitel′naia data). This date is "dubious" (a "date *in question* " in Brodsky's clever translation) in the sense that it signifies the wrong temporal label for the image in the photo; that is, typically when a photo is marked with a date, we expect it to correspond to the date the picture was taken, which is not the case here. Thus, we understand word and image in this poem to be occupying multiple distinct temporal planes: the photo is a fragmented and static slice of the past, while the words of the diary represent a present time frame that, in the wake of the explorer's death, will send a message to the future.

In the final lines of the short lyric, we learn that the explorer has little time before he succumbs to death's grip:

И гангрена, чернея, взбирается по бедру,
как чулок девицы из варьете.[60]

And, like the silk stocking of a burlesque half-nude
queen, it climbs up his thigh: gangrene.[61]

While connected to the earlier image of beading and beauty spot, this metaphor goes further, likening the gangrene-infected leg to a cabaret dancer's stocking and thereby completing the metamorphosis of the image of the beloved into a carnivalesque embodiment of death. The dying man's salacious vision clings to life through the figuring of erotic desires, momentarily distracting us from the explorer's tragedy. The photographs ultimately compel us to refocus on the poignancy of the situation and the loss to be suffered by the living who will remain to mourn the explorer's death. Like the poet's lines, the dying man's written account of his adventures—recorded on a fragmented image—may live on for posterity as its own kind of "message in a bottle." Brodsky was well

aware of the letter in a bottle trope and Osip Mandelshtam's reading of Evgeny Baratynsky in *On the Interlocutor* (*O sobesednike*), in which he reasoned that the poet writes for an unknown future reader.[62] For Brodsky, the photograph enhanced by the written word operates as his own version of the poetic message in a bottle.

The blending of photographic image and poetic word takes on many forms in Brodsky's creative world. He draws on the merging of word and image as visual-poetic postcard, in which a caption or note deepens and transforms the meaning of a photograph or drawing. But the photo-caption is more than simply a mythical-poetic idea for Brodsky; it is an element of his personal photographic practice. He captioned photographs, complicating and repositioning the meaning of the image through the addition of a textual referent. The story of the Yakutsk airport photograph related earlier in this chapter is one example of this captioning of the photographic image to create a text that speaks of past and future in the same plane.

A caption on a different photograph, one that Brodsky sent to the poet and history professor at Mount Holyoke College Peter Viereck, provides yet another salient example of Brodsky's photo-poetic microtext.[63] Viereck had visited the Soviet Union and met with Brodsky twice, in 1962 and 1969, but was apparently expelled from the USSR after the second visit because of his writing on Soviet anti-Semitism. In 1970, Viereck's student from Mount Holyoke, Lynette Labinger, traveled to Leningrad in Viereck's stead to meet with and interview Brodsky. According to the notes she kept, which were published in 2000, she asked for a photograph of Brodsky at Viereck's request. The two settled on a snapshot of Brodsky, seated, with a cat on his lap and a Leningrad canal in the background. On the reverse of this image, Brodsky penned the following lines:

> "You all are moving, I alone am static."
> Dear Peter
> Here is the best couple which I know.
> Your Joseph Brodsky
> 14-VII-70 Leningrad-on-Waters

The opening quotation borrows and modifies a line of Viereck's verse, as a subtle political message to his counterpart in the United States. Viereck's poem "You All Are Static; I Alone Am Moving" features the voice of a young willow tree addressing humanity. This poem begins

You all are static; I alone am moving.
As I race past each planted railroad wheel,
I pity you and long to reel
You through my thousand outstretched ways of loving.
Are you alive at all? Can non-trees feel?[64]

Viereck's text inverts the conventional understanding of time, movement, and freedom, and suggests that human life's swift march toward death makes man comparatively static from the point of view of a tree, under whose roots humans are too soon buried. In inverting the opening lines of this poem,Brodsky expresses frustration with his life in Russia after his internal exile. In a 2003 interview, Viereck explained that when he visited him, Brodsky felt he would not be able to leave Russia.[65] When he wrote these lines on the photograph, Brodsky told Labinger he wanted to leave the Soviet Union, but not permanently because his readers were in Russia. We might read his ironic caption, "You all are moving, I alone am static" as conveying his sense that nothing would change, that he was stuck in an impossible situation, even as the water freely flowed around him. Of course, the prediction would be proven false, and Brodsky would soon rejoin a world of movement and freedom, though permanently separated from his Russian readership in the Soviet Union. Perhaps more consistent with his broader photo-poetic system would be to read "I alone am static" as referring instead to the poet's awareness of the way that the photograph freezes an image in static form. Regardless of who took the photo, Brodsky's act of adding this caption to his image renders him coauthor of the image-text, thus co-opting it as a form of self-portraiture. His emphasis on the static nature of the photographic portrait, juxtaposed with the living, moving people to whom he sends it further solidifies the notion of the photograph's status as a moment from the past thrust into a far-flung future life.

Brodsky uses both photographs and poetry as a means of observing and reflecting on how time alters people and places. His 1994 poem "We Lived in a City the Color of Frozen Vodka" (My zhili v gorode tsveta okamenevshei vodki . . .) is another central photo-poetic text that draws together themes of memory and photography to capture the changes that history has wrought on his native city of Leningrad. It is perhaps not surprising that Brodsky added the title "A Photograph" when he translated this poem into English that same year. As Joanna Madloch argues, this English-language title significantly shapes our reading of this text, although even the Russian-language version makes direct reference

to Kodak, which also encourages considering this text in terms of photography.[66] Significant from the standpoint of "text and image" is that this poem appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* on October 28, 1994, paired with another poem he wrote in English called "A Postcard" ("The country is so populous that polygamists and serial/killers . . .").

Мы жили в городе цвета окаменевшей водки.
Электричество поступало издалека, с болот,
и квартира казалась по вечерам
перепачканной торфом и искусанной комарами.
Одежда была неуклюжей, что выдавало
близость Арктики. В том конце коридора
дребезжал телефон, с трудом оживая после
недавно кончившейся войны.
Три рубля украшали летчики и шахтеры.
Я не знал, что когда-нибудь этого больше уже не будет.
Эмалированные кастрюли кухни
внушали уверенность в завтрашнем дне, упрямо
превращаясь во сне в головные уборы либо
в торжество Циолковского. Автомобили тоже
катились в сторону будущего и были
черными, серыми, а иногда (такси)
даже светло-коричневыми. Странно и неприятно
думать, что даже железо не знает своей судьбы
и что жизнь была прожита ради апофеоза
фирмы Кодак, поверившей в отпечатки
и выбрасывающей негативы.
Райские птицы поют, не нуждаясь в упругой ветке.[67]

We lived in a city tinted the color of frozen vodka.
Electricity arrived from afar, from swamps,
And the apartment, at evening, seemed
Smudged with peat and mosquito-bitten.
Clothes were cumbersome, betraying
The proximity of the Arctic. At the corridor's farthest end
The telephone rattled, reluctantly coming back
To its senses after the recently finished war.
The three-ruble note sported coal miners and aviators.
I didn't know that someday all this would be no more.
In the kitchen, enameled pots

Were instilling confidence in tomorrow
by turning stubbornly, in a dream, into headgear or
a Martian army. Motorcars also were
rolling toward the future and were mostly black,
gray, and sometimes—the taxis—
even light brown. It's strange and not very pleasant
to think that even metal knows not its fate
and that life has been spent for the sake of an apotheosis
of the Kodak company, with its faith in prints
and jettisoning of the negatives.
Birds of Paradise sing, despite no bouncing branches.[68]

In two articles on photography's role in shaping this poem, Madloch argues that the text is constructed such that it simulates a photograph.[69] She notes the "grey and sepia tones" evoked by the description of the city as the "color of frozen vodka," and she draws attention to the fractured, montage-like character of the poem's mode of description.[70]

Madloch also explores the juxtaposition of images from the past with meditations on the future in the transformation of enameled pots into futuristic dream-images and automobiles that move forward into the future. In addition, she comments on the marked transition from the plural first-person narrative in the poem's opening lines (*My zhili . . .*) to a singular "ia" (I) at the poem's center, which looks back from a position in the present tense, a moment in the future of the original snapshots that reflects on their ultimate demise: "I didn't know that someday all this would be no more." (Ia ne znal, chto kogda-nibud′ etogo bol′she uzhe ne budet.)[71] This poem models Brodsky's conception of the intersection of memory, image, and poetic writing. The poem is full of the paradoxes about photography we have come to expect from Brodsky; he at once mourns the way that "life has been spent for the sake of an apotheosis/of the Kodak company, with its faith in prints/and jettisoning of the negatives." Humans have come to value preserved images over lived experiences, and the raw memories of experiences in the world are sacrificed for the sake of a material keepsake. Yet, once again, Brodsky paradoxically employs a photographic image as the model for reconstructing a memory of a time and place (the Leningrad of his youth) that he can no longer access.

Portraits of Poets, Portraits in Dreams: Poetry,

Photography, Metaphysics

Когда-нибудь, когда не станет нас,
точнее—после нас, на нашем месте
возникнет тоже что-нибудь такое,
чему любой, кто знал нас, ужаснется.
Но знавших нас не будет слишком много.

—"Остановка в пустыне," 1966

And someday when we are no longer here,
or, after us, to put it more precisely,
there will arise in our place something different,
which anyone who knew us will have fear of,
but there will not be many left who knew us.

—"A Stop in the Desert," 1966[72]

For in art lightness of touch more often than not comes from the very darkness of its absence.

—"To Please a Shadow," 1986

In his foreword to a 1988 volume of nineteenth-century Russian poetry in English, Brodsky writes of the analogous relationship between the creative acts of writing poetry and taking photographs. What links photography and poetry in his conception is the property of these texts that gives them lasting resonance; the precision with which each encapsulates its primary subject: a person or place in a photograph, but an ephemeral, metaphysical element in a poem. "A good poem, in a sense, is like a photograph that puts its subjects' metaphysical features into sharp focus. Accordingly, a good poet is one who does this sort of thing in a camera-like fashion: quite unwittingly, almost in spite of himself. A poem, of course, should be memorable, yet what commits it to memory is not its linguistic texture alone. The push is given by the metaphysics, by the semblance of universal value in the statement."[73]

This section probes more deeply the way that photography operates for Brodsky as a metaphor for the tools poetry has available for capturing the experiences and sensations that make us human. These are part of the metaphysical mode, the "accelerated thinking," that Brodsky believed elevates poetry above prose.[74] This essential human element, which occupies an almost spiritual plane, existing beyond or supplementary to the physical world, is something that Brodsky identifies in his own

readings of photographs and especially in photographs of particular poets.

"To Please a Shadow" (1986), a poignant essay on W. H. Auden, offers a profound entrée into further exploring the way that poetry and photography inform one another in Brodsky's creative world. What attracted Brodsky to Auden's poems was the elder poet's "metaphysics disguised as common sense, common sense disguised as nursery-rhyme couplets" and his capacity as a poet "who spoke the truth, or through whom the truth made itself audible."[75] But the photographs he first encountered of the man did not comport with this image of the poet in his mind: "That was how I first saw Auden's face. It was a terribly reduced photograph—a bit studied, with a too didactic handling of shadow: it said more about the photographer than about his model." The many unsatisfying photographs Brodsky saw of Auden prompted him to wonder about inter-art aesthetics. "Later, of course, I saw other photographs of Auden: in a smuggled magazine or in other anthologies. Still they added nothing; the man eluded lenses, or they lagged behind the man. I began to wonder whether one form of art was capable of depicting another, whether the visual could apprehend the semantic."[76]

Figure 3.7. "W. H. Auden" by Rollie McKenna, 1952. Courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery. Gift of the Artist and purchased with the A. Conger Goodyear, B.A. 1899 Fund. File 1989.78.3.

The photograph of Auden that finally spoke to him, one in which he grasped some aspect of this man's countenance that echoed a key element of his poetics, was in a volume of poems given to him in Moscow in 1968 or 1969 by Nadezhda Mandelshtam. The volume was, Brodsky recalls, illustrated with high-quality portraits by Rollie McKenna of the poets anthologized therein, a photo-poetic encounter in its own right

(figure 3.7). Similar to the way Tsvetaeva and Akhmadulina write about photographs discovered and later lost, the image of Auden disappeared along with the book Brodsky lent to someone, but it stuck in his mind with incredible clarity.[77] Brodsky

identifies an expressive contrast in the image: Auden is captured in motion, "caught unawares, in passage, eyebrows lifted in bewilderment," yet his eyes demonstrate a core constant, they are "terribly calm and keen." This paradox of interrupted motion combined with the fixed steadiness of gaze operates for Brodsky as a Barthian punctum, a moment of revelation that illuminates for him how the man and the poetry are linked: "Everything, or almost everything became clear to me," as the following lengthy narrative reveals:

> The contrast or, better still, the degree of disparity between those eyebrows risen in formal bewilderment and the keenness of his gaze, to my mind, directly corresponded to the formal aspects of his lines (two lifted eyebrows = two rhymes) and to the blinding precision of their content. What stared at me from the page was the facial equivalent of a couplet, of truth that's better known by heart. The features were regular, even plain. There was nothing specifically poetic about this face, nothing Byronic, demonic, ironic, hawkish, aquiline, romantic, wounded, etc. Rather, it was the face of a physician who is interested in your story though he knows you are ill. A face well prepared for everything, a sum total of a face.
>
> . . .
>
> Strange things they are, faces of poets. In theory, authors' looks should be of no consequence to their readers: reading is not a narcissistic activity, neither is writing, yet the moment one likes a sufficient amount of a poet's verse one starts to wonder about the appearance of the writer. This, presumably, has to do with one's suspicion that to like a work of art is to recognize the truth, or the degree of it, that art expresses. Insecure by nature, we want to see the artist, whom we identify with his work, so that the next time around we might know what truth looks like in reality. Only the authors of antiquity escape this scrutiny, which is why, in part, they are regarded as classics, and their generalized marble features that dot niches in libraries are in direct relation to the absolute archetypal significance of their oeuvre. But when you read

. . . To visit
The grave of a friend, to make an ugly scene,
To count the loves one has grown out of,
Is not nice, but to chirp like a tearless bird,
As though no one dies in particular

And gossip were never true, unthinkable . . .

you begin to feel that behind these lines there stands not a blond, brunette, pale, swarthy, wrinkled, or smooth-faced concrete author but life itself; and *that* you would like to meet; *that* you would like to find yourself in human proximity to.[78]

For Brodsky, well-executed poetry and photography have the potential to provide the reader with access to aspects of human nature that go beyond surface details, even as they use surfaces as the material of their art. Brodsky says as much when he writes on the creative potential of surfaces in *Water-mark*: "One's eye precedes one's pen, and I resolve not to let my pen lie about its position. Having risked the charge of depravity, I won't wince at that of superficiality either. Surfaces—which is what the eye registers first—are often more telling than their contents, which are provisional by definition, except, of course, in the afterlife."[79]

It is not only in the properties of surfaces that Brodsky finds a conceptual link between photography and human nature but also in the geography of borders. To delve further into Brodsky's ideas about metaphysics, borders, and photography, we turn now to his *Lithuanian Nocturne*, where a photographic metaphor illuminates broader concepts concerning human nature, political space, and historical time. Brodsky began writing *Lithuanian Nocturne* in 1973 or 1974, and the poem serves as his farewell to Lithuania. It is dedicated to Tomas Venclova and includes apostrophes within the text that addresses this friend and fellow poet. The poem has a Tsvetaeva-like quality, a suggestion of meetings and nonmeetings, specters, and attempts to delineate and overcome barriers and borders, if not physically, then through the metaphysical capacity of poetic language. A photographic metaphor in stanza XI takes the tension between photographic fixity and temporal flow and applies it to a much broader geopolitical realm.

XI

Существуют места,

где ничто не меняется. Это—
заменители памяти, кислый триумф фиксажа.
Там шлагбаум на резкость наводит верста.
Там чем дальше, тем больше в тебе силуэта.
Там с лица сторожа
моложавей. Минувшее смотрит вперед
настороженным глазом подростка в шинели,
и судьба нарушителем пятится прочь
в настоящую старость с плевком на стене,
с ломотой, с бесконечностью в форме панели
либо лестницы. Ночь
и взаправду граница, где, как татарва,
территориям прожитой жизни набегом
угрожает действительность, и наоборот,
где дрова переходят в деревья и снова в дрова,
где что веко не спрячет,
то явь печенегом
как трофей подберет.[80]

XI

There are places in which
things don't change. These are a substitute
for one's memory. These are the acid
triumphs of the fixative. There each mile
puts striped bars into focus, one's suit
gravitates to a silhouette, added
to one's thinking. Meanwhile,
soldiers there grow younger. The past
peers ahead with a wary
eye, well matching the khaki attire of youth,
and one's fate, like a border trespasser, reels fast
into brittle old age with its spittle, its aching, its weary
shuffling down the infinity-reeking night pavements. In truth,
night's the border where reality, like
Tartars, threatens the kingdom
of what has been lived through with a raid, or perhaps vice-versa;
where logs
join their trees and split back into logs, where daylight
grabs what night's left unhidden

under tight eyelids' locks.[81]

For Brodsky Lithuania sits on the edge of two historical empires—Roman and Russian. In stanza XI, the lyric speaker likens the seeming imperviousness of this place, this borderland of empires, to the unchanging quality of a photographic image, the "kislyi triumf fiksazha" ("acid triumph of the fixative"). These places that remain unchanged are, he tells us "a substitute for one's memory," an unwavering, stubborn geopolitical placeholder. Yet what becomes clear as the stanza unfolds around this melancholic, seemingly unwavering image of a place at the edge of an empire, replete with barriers and border guards, is that the passage is also a way for Brodsky to work out concepts that extend beyond the political realm. The photographic metaphor here allows for contemplation of geopolitical space, but also of the temporal boundaries between present and past and the metaphysical boundaries of life and death. As Venclova noted, this is "the border of a totalitarian 'superpower,' of a world 'where nothing changes'—of a world of which the Berlin Wall was all but the main symbol." Venclova also acknowledges that the root of the problem with which Brodsky wrestles is one that is the essence of what it means to be human: "The issue, as usual for Brodsky, is above all about loneliness, despair, loss of a link with the world in its entirety, existence in the face of death, the 'boundary situation,' as an existentialist philosopher would say."[82]

In this image of borderland as a memory space fixed by a photochemical process, we find another instance of the photographic trope pointing to the possibility of interpretation in multiple temporal realms. When Brodsky likens this unchanging place to a fixed photographic image, he is digging into the problem of how, even though texts or photographic images themselves might not change forms, the way we read them most certainly does. Though the image—or the location—is said to remain permanently fixed, our capacity to envision shifting interpretations of what appears to be a stable text is girded by visual and temporal shifts happening in the lines of the poem.

How is visual perception connected to multiple temporal spaces and the passage of time in stanza XI? Distance—spatial, but also temporal—adds clarity, but also seems to erase aspects of the self ("There each mile / puts striped bars into focus, one's suit / gravitates to a silhouette, added / to one's thinking"). If geographical boundaries hold firm, time marches on: border guards seem younger and younger ("Meanwhile, / soldiers there grow younger"), and old age, sickness, and death begin to haunt the

lines of the poem ("and one's fate, like a border trespasser, reels fast/into brittle old age with its spittle, its aching, its weary / shuffling down the infinity-reeking night pavements."). The final threat—night—is emblematic of death, although Brodsky suggests that the space of sleep is one of the malleable temporal possibilities. Waking life is surely subject to the march of time toward death, but the space of dreams ("under tight eyelids' locks") is figured as a place of temporary protections, where time can operate in reversible cycles ("where logs / join their trees and split back into logs").

These seemingly permanent relics—photographs or imperial borderlands—embody space coming into contact with time. Like poetry, which draws on a past of language to create a present with a mind to the future, so too do photographic images—stilled, two-dimensional spaces that encapsulate a moment of past lived experience—exist for the present and the future.

Two additional texts exist in which the temporal and spatial strangeness of sleep intersects with photographic imagery in Brodsky's works. At a reading at the Academy of American Poets in November 1986 Brodsky introduced his fellow poet Mark Strand, urging the audience to listen well to Strand's verse, "not because his poems are difficult, i.e., hermetic or obscure—they are not—but because they evolve with the immanent logic of a dream, which calls for a somewhat heightened degree of attention."[83] If the central landscape of "Lithuanian Nocturne" evokes the imaginative space of night and dreams, so too do Brodsky's praises for Strand center on the creative potential of this alternative plane of consciousness: poetry formed as if in the space of dreams. What is remarkable here is that once again Brodsky uses cinematic and photographic frameworks to talk about the poetic process, this time to evoke Stand's ability to access another metaphysical mode of visualizing the deepest human truths: "Very often his stanzas resemble a sort of slow-motion film shot in a dream that selects reality more for its open-endedness than for mechanical cohesion. Very often they give a feeling that the author managed to smuggle a camera into his dream. A reader more reckless than I would talk about Strand's surrealist techniques; I think about him as a realist, a detective, really, who follows himself to the source of his disquiet."

What could it mean for a writer to "smuggle a camera into his dream"? Prior to making the remarks about Strand, Brodsky used a similar set of imagery—photographs taken in a dream—in his 1981 cycle *Roman Elegies*. By comparing the finished text of part V of *Roman Elegies* to

a set of manuscript drafts of the poem we see the reemergence of the imagery that supports this interpretation. In this text, Brodsky refers to photographs and poetry as alternative forms of commemoration. Contrasting the published version of these lines (and Brodsky's auto-translation of it) with the previously unpublished drafts of the poem, we develop a clearer sense of where poetry and photography stand in relation to one other in Brodsky's creative worldview.

"Embrace with a Leica": Reading the Photographic in Brodsky's Roman Elegies. A Manuscript Study

Brodsky's 1981 *Roman Elegies* cycle presents a series of lyric "ruins" inspired by the conjured physical ruins of the ancient city where Brodsky traveled and his admiration of Goethe's cycle of the same name.[84] Optical imagery appears in key places throughout the cycle as the eye is trained on contrasting visions of light and shadow. David Rigsbee describes this key motif as "a sequence of the eye's dialectical relationship with voice, as expressed in terms of light's relationship with dark."[85] The metaphor involving relics and ruins centers on the poet's contemplation of and concern for time's ability to wear away at architectural (macro) structures, and also individual (micro) lives. The ruins' role in preserving the memory of a former civilization is thrown into sharp relief when a parallel process of immortalizing the poet, using language, is brought to the fore in part V, as the metaphor of architectural ruins is temporarily replaced by the notion of the photograph as a kind of ruin of the past that can be rediscovered.

Critical treatments of the cycle have employed photographic metaphors to describe the poems that make up the *Roman Elegies* cycle, yet these critics seem to overlook the overt reference to photography that Brodsky includes in part V. Georges Nivat, for example, characterizes the *Roman Elegies* as "a succession of snapshots of the City in August. Hostage of stone, the City is petri-fied, and the apprentice poet he too, in that City, runs the risk of being turned to stone."[86] Nivat's reading of the cycle as a series of snapshots is echoed in Rigsbee's reading of the text as well. Rigsbee sees a parallel in the "snapshot quality" of Brodsky's *Roman Elegies* and Robert Lowell's musings on the problem of poetry's enslavement to fact.[87] Interestingly, neither Rigsbee nor Nivat takes up the lines from *Roman Elegies* that engage photography directly, especially given that each of these critics is concerned with visual and verbal metaphors of ruins and artifacts of remembrance.

In contemplating his legacy, Brodsky writes in part V of *Roman Elegies* that like the many great poets before him (he nods here to Horace and Pushkin), he anticipates that his future lies in the words he will leave as his legacy rather than images (pictorial or architectural).[88] Yet the notion of capturing and preserving life in photographs resurfaces here again as an alternative form of self-preservation in art.

Я не воздвиг уходящей к тучам
каменной вещи для их острастки.
О своем—и о любом—грядущем
я узнал у буквы, у черной краски.
Так задремывают в обнимку
с "лейкой," чтоб, преломляя в линзе
сны, себя опознать по снимку,
очнувшись в более длинной жизни.[89]

[My translation]
I've not erected a stone object
going up to the clouds, threatening them.
About my own—about any—future
I've learned from a letter, from black ink
Just as others doze into an embrace,
with a Leica
refracting dreams in the lens,
and waking up in a longer life.

[Brodsky's translation]
I've never built that cloud-thrusting stony
object that could explain clouds' pallor.
I've learned about my own, and any
fate, from a letter, from its black color.
Thus some fall asleep while hugging
a Leica, in order to take a picture
of the dream, to make themselves out,
having awakened in a developed future.[90]

The blackness of the letters on the page seems to have more permanence for the poet, though he acknowledges that other people often attempt to use film to capture for posterity the essence of their mortal lives and dreams. Like other examples of photographic imagery in Brodsky's work, these lines suggest a contradictory message about the relationship

between memory and the photographic snapshot. By juxtaposing a powerful "I" (ia ne vozdvig) with a weaker, subjectless third person plural verb form "[they] fall asleep" (zadremyvaiut), the speaker demonstrates a subtle preference for a creative legacy in the form of words on a page. At the same time, photography is cast as a plausible alternative to text within the *vita brevis, ars longa* maxim; the "dreams" refracted in the camera lens are indeed recognizable "in a developed future" to those who took the snapshots (chtob . . . sebia opoznat' po snimku).

This poem is undoubtedly about tools for preserving memory and legacies. It is concerned with the future tense of the photograph, or what will exist of a person after death. At the same time the text features fascinating lines about how some people "fall asleep while hugging / a Leica," about "refracting dreams in the lens" (prelomliaia v linze sny) and about "awak[ing] in a developed future"; these, I argue, speak to what Walter Benjamin called the "optical unconscious," a notion to which I return in chapter 5. Benjamin argued that just as psychoanalysis gives us access to the unconscious workings of the mind, so too does photography give us access to a visual experience that moves us in unconscious ways.[91] Brodsky seems to share this belief that photographs—and poems—can reveal to us things about ourselves that exist in the metaphysical realm, in the inner workings of the unconscious mind. Poems and photographs give us access to the kind of knowledge we acquire in the state of sleep and dreams.

If we turn to drafts of this poem, which I located in a manuscript notebook in the Joseph Brodsky Papers at Yale University's Beinecke Library, we have the opportunity to consider the way that this text evolved during the composition process. Because these working drafts appear to have been written with the same pen and were likely worked through and revised in the same sitting, we can surmise these changes happened in a single focused work session and at a somewhat rapid pace. These particular working drafts offer an intimate account of Brodsky's process of poetic creation. We will see that he sometimes works from text that comes to him nearly fully formed. For sections that need to be developed and worked through more intensely, he leaves space in the draft and works out the lines on a separate page, crossing things out that he does not like, writing in alternatives above or below, in parentheses or brackets. In this case, we will see how he develops four key lines about photography and poetry over the course of several pages of a notebook. Tracking the text from an early stage of its conceptualization and comparing it to its final published version can offer information about the

broader meaning of the work. As Dana Gioia puts it, "Seeing what a poet cut out often helps clarify what was left in."[92]

The aspect of Brodsky's photo-poetics that emerges from these drafts is related to the poet's view of the analogical relationship between photography and poetic writing. That is, the drafts reveal Brodsky working through the parallels he sees in the process of taking a photograph and the stages of poetic writing. In the working drafts of part V of the *Roman Elegies* we see him developing the lines he will publish, lines that cement his assertion that photographs operate for most people the way lines of verse do for this poet, as evidence of a creative life that will endure beyond the life of their author (in the case of poetry) or subject (in the case of photographs). Exploring the evolution of the photography theme in these lines sheds light on the tension Brodsky constructs here and elsewhere about the degree to which we can trust the photographic image to convey our spirit and our legacy into an uncertain future.

My focus here is the final four lines of part V, which are the focal point of these drafts.[93] In figure 3.8 we see that by this point in the composition process, Brodsky has developed lines 1–8 exactly as they will appear in the final published version. Lines 9–12 are in nearly final form, though he will go on to express the same ideas through more succinct phrasing; the differences in the draft are in bold below. Lines 13–16 are left blank and will be developed on the subsequent two pages of the notebook (figures 3.9 and 3.10).

Working drafts ll. 9–12 (figure 3.8)

Я ничего не воздвиг, что б стремилось к тучам
с гордостью—иль на предмет острастки.
О своем—и о любом—грядущем
я узнал у буквы, у черной краски.

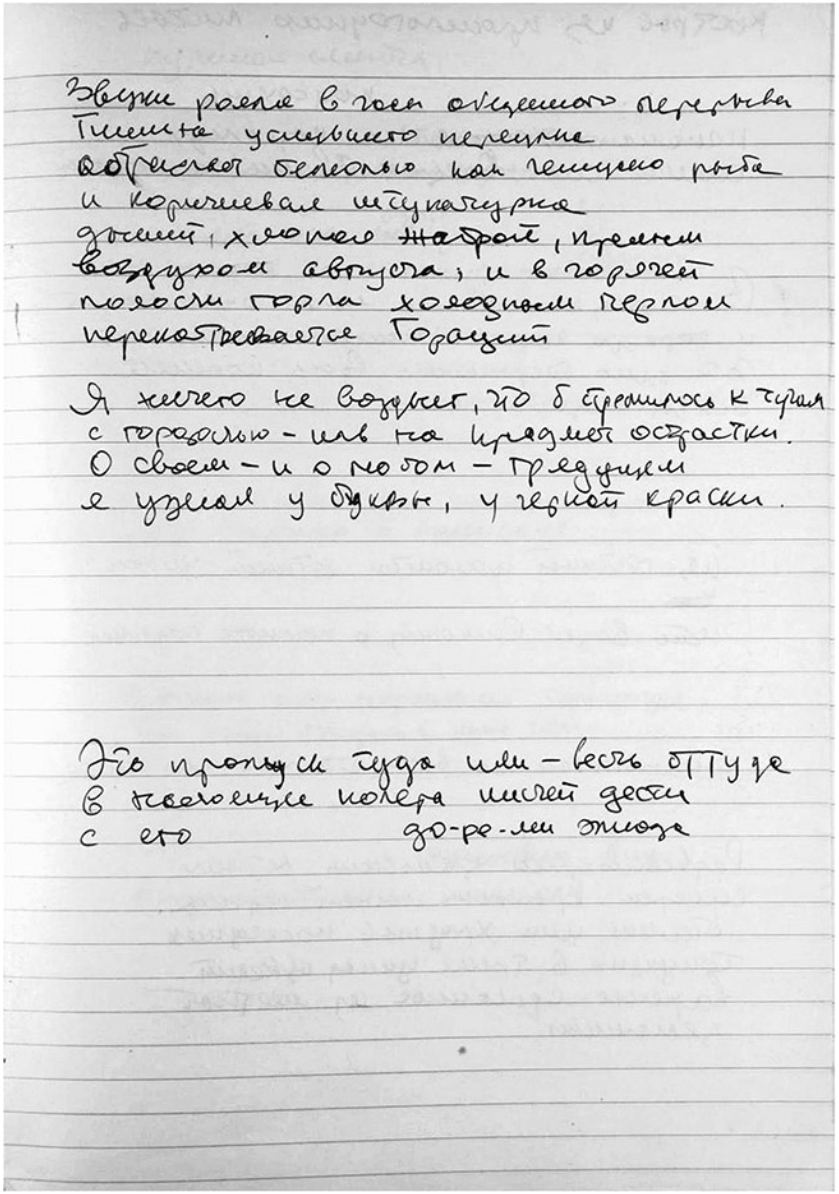
Published version ll. 9–12

Я не воздвиг уходящей к тучам
каменной вещи для их острастки.
О своем—и о любом—грядущем
я узнал у буквы, у черной краски.

Transcription of figure 3.9

Так задремывают в обнимку
с фотокамерой
привидится
если что приснится что нибудь лучше жизни
/ нечто длиннее /
с фотокамерой, не снявши платья
с пальцем на спуске, доверив снимку
не доверившееся [-иеся?] объятью

чтоб потом наяву
круглой
с “лейкой” в [комнате?] что черной линзе
дабы посредством линзы
снимку
нечто длиннее и лучше жизни



Звуки рояля в гаме открытого перелива
Тишина услышит перелив
обретает белизну как чешуя рыба
и коричневая штукатурка
дождит, хлопок жаброй, пряным
воздухом августа; и в горячей
полости горла холодным перлом
перекатывается Гораций

Я ничего не возьму, что б страшилось к чужим
с городом - или на предмет осадки.
О своем - и о моем - преданиям
я ужился у буквы, у черной краски.

Это пропусти туда или - весь оттуда
в тождестве колера имитей десен
с его до-ре-ми этюда

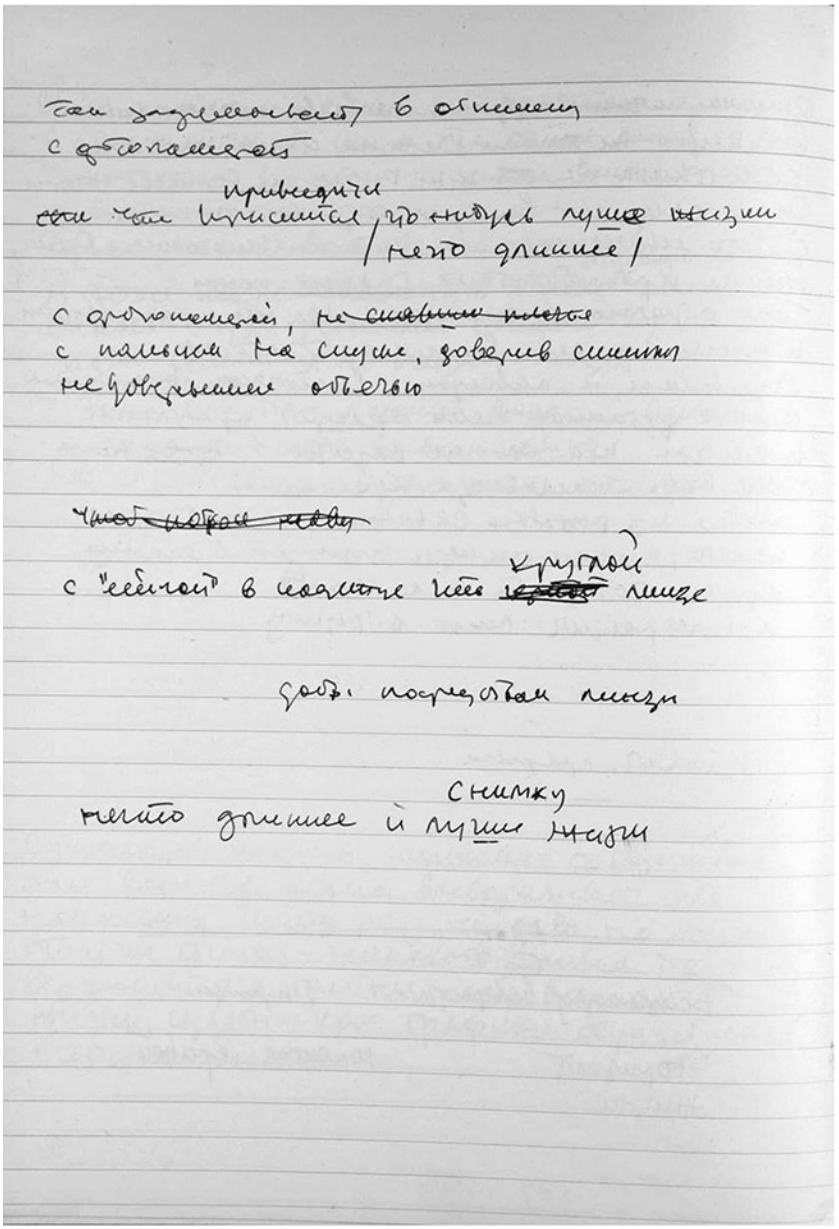


Figure 3.9. Draft notebook of lines 13–20 of Part V of Brodsky's *Roman Elegies*. Courtesy of Joseph Brodsky Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

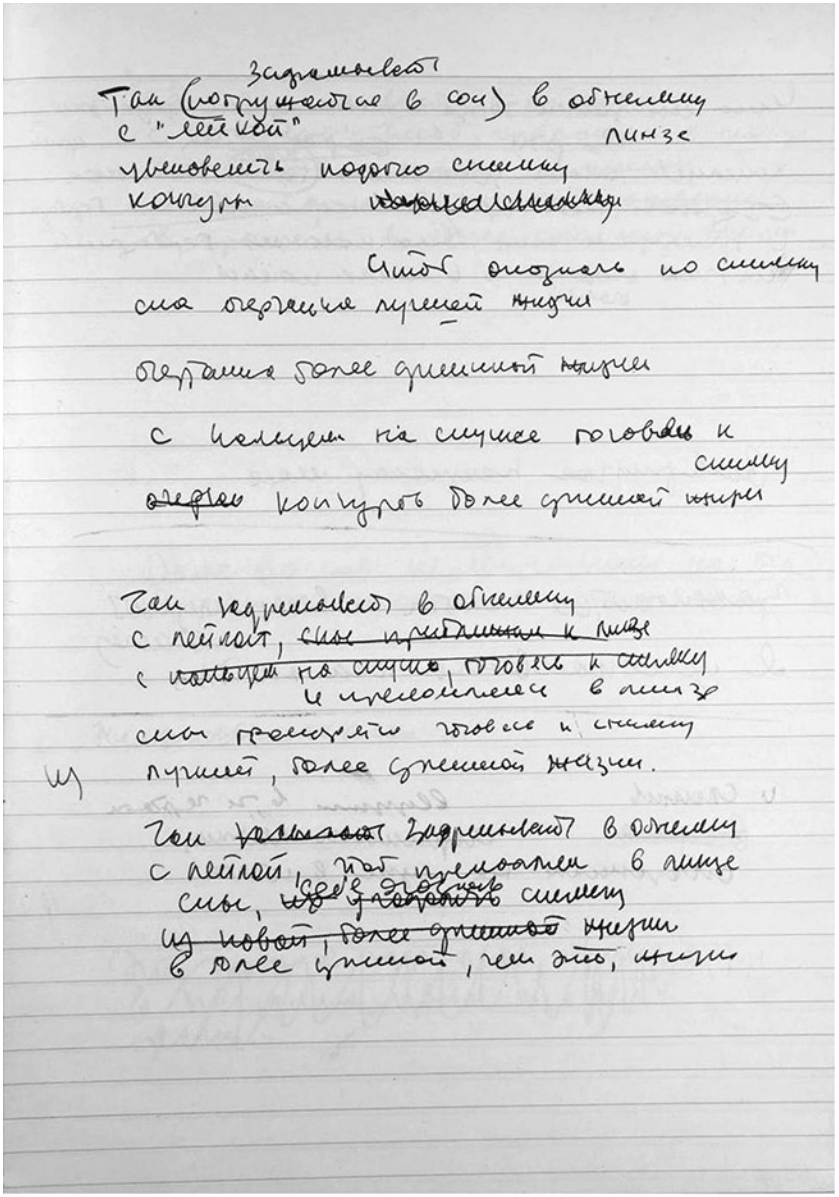


Figure 3.10. Draft notebook of lines 13–20 of Part V of Brodsky's *Roman Elegies*. Courtesy of Joseph Brodsky Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Transcription of Figure 3.10

Задремывают
Так (погружаются в сон) в обнимку

с “лейкой” линзе
увековечить подобно снимку
контуры ??????? снимку
чтоб опознать по снимку

сна очертания лучшей жизни

очертания более длинной жизни

с пальцем на спуске готовясь к
снимку
очерков контуров более длинной жизни

Так задремывают в обнимку
с лейкой, сны приближая к линзе
с пальцем на спуске, готовясь к снимку
и преломляясь В линзе
сны громоздятся готовясь к снимку
из лучшей, более длинной жизни.

Так засыпают задремывают в обнимку
с лейкой, чтоб преломляя в линзе
себя опознать [опознав?]
сны, их уподобить снимку
из новой, более длинной жизни
в более длинной, чем эта[о?], жизни.

By this point in the drafting process, Brodsky seems to have settled on using the comparison between writing poetry and the practice of taking photographs. He repeats four times on these two pages versions of a line meaning “to fall asleep in an embrace with the camera.” Experimenting with other formulations for sleep—“pogruzhaiutsia v son” (to be plunged into sleep) and “zasypaiut” (to fall asleep)—he ultimately returns to “zadremyvaiut” (to nod off, doze off). He substitutes the camera brand “leika” for the longer “fotokamera” by the third iteration. Brodsky appears to quickly abandon a play on words “ne sniavshi plat′ia” (not removing/not photographing a dress); the verb “sniat′” means both to photograph and to remove a garment. In its place, he works through iterations of refraction or magnification in the lens: “in a round lens” (v krugloi linze); “so that through the lens” (daby posredstvom linzy); “dreams closing in toward the lens” (sny priblizhaia k linze); and settles

on "so that refracting dreams in the lens" (chtob prilomliaia v linze sny).

There are two lexical clusters in these drafts that Brodsky explores, and ultimately abandons, that are significant in thinking about how photographs and poetry can each provide a means to immortalize the creative individual. The two notions that are most significant here are: 1) the theme of trust in the photographic image, and 2) the lexicon surrounding the mechanical nature of the photographic process. On the theme of trust in the snapshot, Brodsky experiments with a line that questions—in Pasternakian fashion—whether we can really fulfill our desire to preserve experience by trusting in the printed photograph alone.

с фотокамерой, не снявши платья
с пальцем на спуске, доверив снимку
не доверившееся [-иеся?] объятью

with a camera, not removing the dress
with a finger on the release, having entrusted to the snapshot
that, which hasn't been entrusted to the embrace

In abandoning the lines about trusting in the photographic print (*doveriv snimku*) and moving to the language of refraction in the lens, Brodsky opens the possibility of imagining the process of photographing as a kind of dynamic dream-state that continually unfolds in a future time frame. On page three of the drafts, the language of trust gives way to a more abstract space of sleep and dreams, from which the memory of the poet will "awaken" in a future life. In the drafts we find attempts at this with the verbs "prividitsia" (envision), "uvekovchit'" (to immortalize), "upodobit'" (to liken), though he ultimately uses "having awakened" (ochnuvshis') in the published version.

Another change the poem undergoes from draft to final version is the focus on the physical act of taking a photograph and the nature of the metaphorical developing process. Brodsky eventually edits out the line about the finger resting on the shutter release (s pal'tsem na spuske). We also note a change in the agency or directionality of the images of the self that emerge from the figurative photographic process. In earlier versions, Brodsky wrote of the way the dreams and intangibles would emerge out of (genitive case) the better, longer life (iz luchshei, bolee dlinnoi zhizni), whereas in the final version the effect of the photographic process is to release these intangibles such that they emerge in (prepositional case) a

longer life (v bolee dlinnoi zhizni). The final version also diminishes the clearly demarcated outlines and contours (ochertaniia, kontury) of this "longer, better (bolee dlinnoi, luchshei) life"; in removing these concrete nouns, Brodsky further emphasizes the dream-like quality of this new space in which the poet's spirit will live on in poetic or photographic form.

A relevant distinction between the power of the poetic word and the strength of the photograph is that photographs exist as physical artifacts, whereas a poem can function in physical space (words on a page, in a book), or in the intangible form of spoken sounds and in the space of memory (when we memorize and recite a text). Brodsky's "embrace with the camera" here, and the sleepy, in-between zone that he develops "in a longer life" in part V of the *Roman Elegies* seems to be an attempt to give the photographic process a similar intangible quality, as if he envisions a fluidity between process and product.

Brodsky explores the notion that photography comes in contact with poetry as a form of preservation of memory in a different essay in which photographic images are compared to abandoned drafts of a poem. In "Altra Ego," Brodsky recounts a visit to an exhibit in a small Italian town, which featured photographs of the wives and lovers of approximately thirty well-known poets from around the world, displayed alongside a famous lyric by each poet, in both the original and in translation. This seemingly fortuitous juxtaposition of text and photographic image leads Brodsky to make the following observation about a darker side of attempts to combine photographic and poetic practices:

> Conscious of the camera or taken unawares, those faces appeared to carry in one way or another a common expression of being elsewhere, or having their mental focus somewhat blurred. The next moment, of course, they would be energetic, alert, supine, lascivious, bearing a child or eloping with a friend, bloody-minded or suffering a bard's infidelity—in short, more definite. For an instant of exposure, though, they were their tentative, indefinite selves, which, like a poem in progress, didn't yet have a next line or, very often, a subject. Also like poems, they were never finished: they were only abandoned. In short, they were drafts.[94]

The subject of photo-poetic depiction here is not the figure of the poet, as is the case in *Roman Elegies*, but rather the female muses of the poets whose legacy flourished after they ceased to write poems. The

images of the women are not cradled in the evolving dream-space of the photographic image that allows a memory to live on in "a longer life"; instead, they are captured, fixed, fragmented in stilted poses. They are pulled from the flow of their (hyper-feminized) lives only to be discarded like imperfect drafts of poems that would never come to fruition (cf. the "jettisoning of the negatives" that Brodsky bemoans in "A Photograph"). Even the poetic texts that accompany these photographs cannot save them from oblivion, for the voice in the poem is not equated with the voice of the figure in the photographs. To explain why poetry and photographic image do not have the same effect here, I invoke Barthes's and Agamben's writings on the exigency of the photographic image and its demand to be named, described, to have its story told. The disconnect between text and image in this essay—the thing that results in the discarding of the ephemeral spirits of the lover/muse—is that the text of the poems does not function as the voice that releases her (the muse's) story. Rather, she is a conduit, a medium for the poet's experience; he tells his story, but not hers.

What emerges here is Brodsky's often contradictory thinking and writing about photography. Photographs operate as a powerful memory space, but ultimately they prove to be most effective when accompanied by verbal art that frames and shapes their story and their context. Language and the poetic word are what allow Brodsky to take charge of the melancholic meditations that photographs so naturally invite. Brodsky harnesses the power of language to transform photographic texts into mileposts by which he can mark his growth as an individual, and the changes he observes in the social space that surrounds him. Photography, like poetry, offers a means of expressive freedom that memory and recollection cannot alone achieve.

If Brodsky uses the photographic to contemplate both abstract and deeply personal ideas about the immortal legacy of the mortal poet, his contemporary Bella Akhmadulina uses descriptions of photographs to chart her own course as a woman poet taking up the mantel of the Silver Age of Russian poetry, that flowering of Russian culture and poetry that spanned approximately 1880–1930. As a member of the generation of "poets of the 1960s," and one who remained in the Soviet Union, Akhmadulina forged a complex creative relationship with the legacy of the previous generation of poets suppressed under Stalinism. Akhmadulina's poems that describe photographs of two other women poets, Anna Akhmatova and Marina Tsvetaeva, provide this poet an avenue to mourn a lost generation and situate her poetic persona in

direct dialogue with the legacy of Russia's Silver Age.

Chapter 4

Poetic Mothers in the Photo Frame

Akhmadulina's Lyric Dialogue with Silver Age Snapshots

Льются с этих фотографий
океаны биографий,
жизнь в которых вся, до дна
с нашей переплетена . . .

There flow from these photographs
Oceans of biographies
The lives of each to the very depths
Are intertwined with ours.

—*Bulat Okudzhava*,
"Photographs of Friends"

Лицо—всегда портрет взлёта души.
The face is always a portrait of the soul ascending.

—*Bella Akhmadulina*,
"A Moment of Existence"

The discussions of the intersection of photography and poetic writing in this book thus far have considered three key approaches to photo-poetic writing: ekphratic writing inspired by real photographs; analogical approaches bridging themes of writing, photography and loss; and the use of the lexicon of photography in poems by Russian writers. Our discussion of Akhmadulina (1937–2010) centers on how poetic writing unfolds when the object of ekphrastic inspiration is not a real photograph

but an imagined one. The contrast between two poems by Akhmadulina—one based on a known photographic portrait, and the other describing an imagined photograph—permits us to think through how John Hollander's definition of "notional ekphrasis," that is, writing about an imagined work of art, enters into the poetic space of twentieth-century Russian elegy.[1] Put another way, this chapter asks: what is the difference between writing a poem about a photograph you hold in your hand, as opposed to one that exists only in the mind's eye? What opportunities become available when a poet chooses to set a poem in the space of a photograph, particularly when there is no actual photographic referent? I suggest here that considering examples of poems that describe imagined photographs—as opposed to those inspired by actual photographs—allows for a deeper exploration of photo-poetics generally, and a fuller understanding of the medium's relationship to thinking about loss and retrieval of the past.[2]

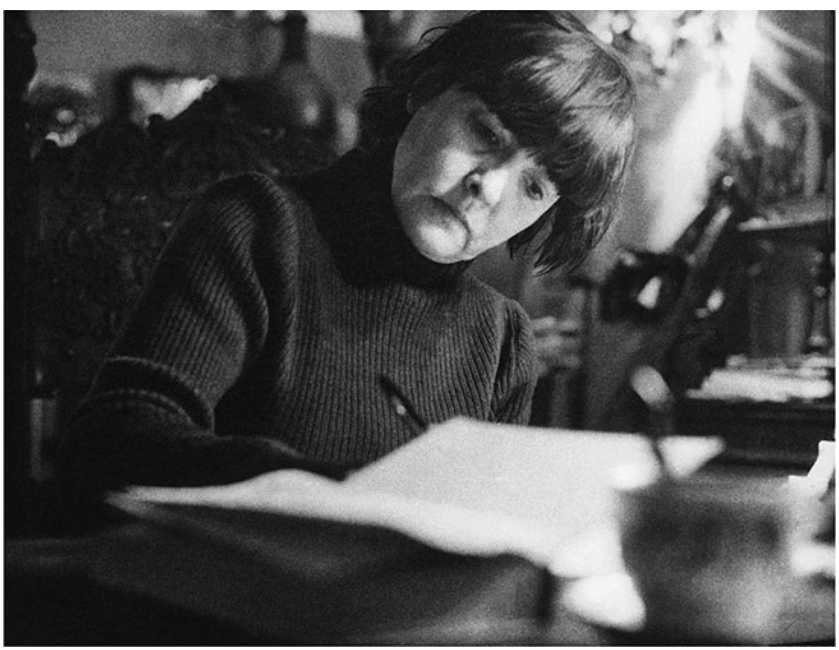


Figure 4.1. Bella Akhmadulina at her writing desk. Image courtesy of the Boris Messerer Archive.

This chapter analyzes the function of photographic motifs in two lyric poems by Akhmadulina, each of which focuses on a description of a photographic image of one of Akhmadulina's "poetic mothers." A photograph of Marina Tsvetaeva is described at the opening of her 1968 "I

Swear" (Klianus'). This image is a product of the poet's creative imagination; it is not based on any known photograph of Tsvetaeva. The other poem is Akhmadulina's 1973 lyric "A Snapshot" (Snimok), which describes an existing photographic portrait of Anna Akhmatova. The photographic images written into these poems operate as points of departure for Akhmadulina's meditations on poetic influence, the relationship of text and image, and problems of historical memory and poetic lineage.

An important mission for the *shestidesiatniki* in general, and Akhmadulina, in particular, is to restore a creative relationship with a previous generation of lost or suppressed poets.[3] Akhmadulina achieves this in her oeuvre through poetic dialogues with a number of key figures, including Pasternak, Akhmatova, and Tsvetaeva. These particular lyrics —"I Swear" and "A Snapshot"—engage with photographic images of Akhmadulina's Silver Age predecessors and offer the poet an avenue to connect with the legacy of this lost generation and situate her poetic persona in direct dialogue with her poetic forebears. Sibelan Forrester argues that it is not unusual for a woman poet to look to female ancestors and predecessors as alternative muses, thereby transforming them "into sources of identity and authority, helping to determine her own identity and destiny."[4] Akhmadulina's poems that feature photographs of these important women poets who came before her are remarkable for their reliance on a visual image, an approach somewhat rare for this poet known more for her stadium recitations and a musical lyricism that privileges the auditory realm over the visual. The texts create for readers an intimate encounter in which the gaze of the lost poet—frozen in the space of the photograph—encounters the gaze of the poet who seeks to engage the legacy of that lost generation and to somehow repair it through poetic intervention.

Literature and Photography during the Thaw

When Akhmadulina writes ekphrastic poems in the 1960s and 1970s on photographs of her poetic predecessors, she is operating within a much larger cultural moment in this period of Soviet history that saw a resurgence of interest in and engagement with the aesthetic, creative, and metaphysical possibilities for photography, the likes of which had not been seen since the Avant-garde experiments of the 1920s. As Susan Reid notes, "the renewal of society, modernization, egalitarianism, the culture of scientific and technological progress, and the new internationalism of

the Thaw created a particularly auspicious climate for a rebirth of photography in the Soviet Union."[5] Jes sica Werneke details in her studies of photo-clubs and photography journals how, in the period following the end of World War II and in the wake of uncertainty in the country after Stalin's death, photography reemerged as a popular hobby. In the 1960s, when materials for taking and developing photographs were more readily available to Soviet citizens, photography enjoyed broad appeal as an amateur pastime, and also flourished under new state-controlled professional photography initiatives. For example, the journal *Sovetskoe foto* (*Soviet Photo*), with its materials intended for amateur and professional photographers alike, resumed publication in 1957 after a fourteen-year hiatus, and the decade that followed saw a tremendous increase in formation of and participation in amateur photo-clubs (*fotokruzhki*) across the major urban areas.[6]

The intersection of photography and literature was an important phenomenon among the *shestidesiatniki*, especially in the way that authorship and censorship were being challenged and reconceptualized in the 1960s and 1970s Soviet Union. The resurgence of interest in and activity surrounding photography among Soviet citizens coincided with major developments in literary culture during the Thaw period. The Thaw was a period of liberalization during which Soviet citizens began to reckon with their recent past, with the truth about the mass killings, repressions, and persecutions that would become known as the Stalinist Terror.[7] In his study of readers' engagement with the prestigious and controversial literary "thick journal" *Novyi Mir* (*New World*), Denis Kozlov argues that discussions of state violence during this post-Stalinist Thaw were not marginal or taking place solely underground, as some historians have characterized these political confrontations with the hard truths of the previous decades. Rather, as seen from the thousands of letters Kozlov analyzes, which were penned to the editors of *Novyi Mir* during this period, there was a great deal of interest, engagement, and openness in these exchanges. As Kozlov writes, "Discussions of the Stalin past transcended the limits of a dissenting underground and took place in considerable openness, in and around legitimate publications. Thousands of people in the 1960s displayed great confidence in their entitlement to express political and historical view openly, and regarded the official media channels as appropriate venues for such self-expression. More than ever before, people perceived reading and responding to literature as consequential political activities."[8]

From its earliest days the Soviet state had made literature and

photography, as well as film, the major instruments of shaping public perception of developments in the country. In the mid-1920s Anatolii Lunacharskii, the Commissar of Enlightenment, declared "the USSR will achieve universal literacy as well as photographic literacy," a statement that connects notions of readerly culture in what was later dubbed the "best-read nation on earth" (*samaia chitaiushchaia strana*) with the practice of taking and looking at photographs.[9] During the resurgence of interest in photography during the Thaw, photography was framed as both document and art, much as literary modes were seen as newly revealing truth-telling devices in this new period of greater transparency. This tension is apparent in a 1961 proclamation by Pavel A. Satiukov, the chief editor of *Pravda* and president of the USSR Union of Journalists: "Photography now occupies a place of honor in newspapers and journals, and we apply new, high standards to photographs, regarding them as a political document truthfully reflecting the life of our people constructing Communism, and at the same time as works of art."[10]

A survey of some of the major creative intersections of photography and literature among Akhmadulina's contemporaries in this late-Soviet period is useful to contextualize this poet's writing about photography within the same period. In his *Gulag Archipelago* (written 1958–68, published in 1973), Alexander Solzhenitsyn used photographic illustrations to reassert control over the photographic and textual narratives of the Gulag experience, in opposition to heavily curated and staged photographs of forced labor projects that had been highlighted in publications like *SSSR na stroike* (*USSR in Construction*).[11] As Katherine Hill Reischl asserts, photographic capture operated as a key tool in the prison system's stripping of individual identity. Taking a photograph of a prison inmate on the occasion of their arrest—recording and fixing the individual's identity just as he was being deprived of his human freedoms—was, paradoxically, the moment in which he or she disappeared from public record. Solzhenitsyn's mission in *Gulag Archipelago* was to restore this human record and assert his power and freedom of authorship. Reischl argues that Solzhenitsyn's textual materials provided a corrective narrative to the official Soviet accounts of the camp conditions. At the same time, she demonstrates that, by incorporating photographic images from both personal and official accounts of the Gulag, Solzhenitsyn manages to reinscribe, renarrate, and reappropriate these images in service of his larger truth-seeking aims.[12]

Similarly, Andrei Bitov's (1937–2018) fictional writings and travelogues—from his novella *Pushkin's Photograph* to lesser known works

such as *Man in the Landscape*, *The Monkey Link*, *Armenian Lessons*, and *Georgian Album*—grapple with the problem of photographic subjectivity and its potential to distort reality. As José Vergara demonstrates in his comprehensive study of this author's literary photographs, Bitov "uses ekphrastic depictions of photos and other related images as key devices to call for a connection to others, to the past, and to nature devoid of pretensions, exclusionary gestures, and self-centered falsifications."[13] Vergara echoes readings by Tatiana Rybal'chenko, Ellen Chances, and Sven Spieker that show a tendency toward self-centered, solipsistic manipulations of photographic materials by Bitov's characters.[14] The photographs described throughout Bitov's fictional world fuel new and distorted conceptions of personal and national identities. Yet Vergara's analysis also uncovers examples in Bitov's works where the author demonstrates faith in other possibilities for reading photographs on their own terms, free of viewer subjectivities and their accompanying distortions.[15]

Another of Akhmadulina's contemporaries, Vasily Aksenov (1932–2009), wrote his 1983 novel *Skazhi izium* (*Say Cheese*) as an account of a scandal caused by the publication of a photographic album that managed to bypass the Soviet censor. The photographic album in the novel is meant to stand in as a thinly veiled reference to the true story of the publication in 1979 of the uncensored literary almanac *Metropol'* (figure 4.2).[16] Elena Gessen considers the cultural implications of this substitution of the photographic for the literary in Aksenov's novel:

> One only needs to a ponder a moment to see why photography is used here instead of literature, when the former is traditionally considered a craft and the latter an art. . . . Aksenov, it seems, doesn't agree with that. He speaks of a "noble, unidentified muse of photography," and he is bewitched by the magic of the embodied image, the charm of the transformation of the negative to a picture, the miracle of the freezing of a moment, of time captured by the camera lens forever—for the ages—held fast, fixed, printed and thus unforgettable. "A photographer is a tiny warrior with a slingshot standing across from the giant Chronos," says one of the most charming characters of the novel . . . And to emerge the victor in this face-off is hardly a simple thing, for nowhere, in not any other country in the world, was photography subjected to such violent persecution, destruction and falsification as it was in the Soviet Union. As Aksenov notes, "the Party gave

> photography its vigilant attention." And it is because of this that our people are so intensely interested in photography.[17]

Aksenov opens the novel with a lengthy introductory "Epigraph" that includes a short poem on the appeal of photography for the central character of the book. This use of lyric poetry as a way of nodding to the substitution of the literary material of *Metropol'* with the fictional photograph album secures the connection from the very first pages of the novel. Each of these literary encounters with the photographic undoubtedly paved the way for other artists and literary groups—the Moscow Conceptualists, the Metarealists (especially poet-photographers Ivan Zhdanov and Aleksei Parshchikov), Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, and other nonconformist creative figures—to conduct their own experiments with writing and photography throughout the late-Soviet period.[18]

Figure 4.2. Authors of the *Metropol'* with the almanac, 1979 (E. Popov, V. Erofeev, B. Akhmadulina, A. Voznesenskii, B. Messerer, F. Iskander, A. Bitov, V. Aksenov, M.

Aksenova). Taken in Moscow at Boris Messerer's studio. Photograph by V. Plotnikov. Image courtesy of the Boris Messerer Archive.

Regarding Photographs of the Past

As a famous Soviet writer who was photographed by fans and well-known professional photographers alike, Akhmadulina was accustomed to being viewed through the camera lens.[19] She and her husband, the artist Boris Messerer, carefully curated her public image and legacy, particularly in her later years. Akhmadulina's prose writings about photography in essays and letters offer critical material for establishing a foundation for understanding her thinking about the medium's role in contemporary culture and in her own life and art; they offer important context for the subsequent analysis of the photographic portraits that serve as visual referents for her poetic meditations on the legacies of Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva.

In her essay "Photographs from a Different Time" (Fotografii raznogo vremeni) Akhmadulina introduces a 1997 collection of personal archival photographs—many from the 1970s and 1980s. She opens with a statement about her deep fondness for looking at old photographs, especially turn of the century photographs from Russia.[20] As with many meditations on the photographic effect, the unsettling shadow of death hovers over these images from the past.[21]

> (In these willful parentheses I will note that I have a keen and tender addiction to photographs from the distant past: from the end of the last and beginning of this century in Russia. The facial expressions and countenances in old photos that have by some miracle survived, they stir and excite the imagination: these men and women, merchants, peddlers . . . Or take this one here: in the bustle of relocating the residents must have left behind this image of a girl in a muslin dress, grasping a bunch of dewy lily-of-the-valley in her hands. She looks into the lens, vivacious and trusting, looks into a future time that will probably turn out to be horrible. On each of these faded, monogrammed, cardboard prints, the presence of fate seems obvious, poised to take their defenselessness by deathly surprise.)[22]

Akhmadulina's descriptions of the photograph she contemplates move suddenly from wistful to startling, revealing a deep awareness of the

layers of temporal, historical, and emotional complexity that are unearthed when we look at photographs from the past. The space of the photograph offers a view of presence and absence in the same plane: the photograph is often valued for its power to bear witness, for its evidentiary force. It is a tangible memento of "that-has-been" (*ça-a-été*), to quote Roland Barthes.[23] The photograph also encapsulates loss; Walter Benjamin, Barthes, Susan Sontag, Georgio Agamben and countless others have written extensively about the photograph as a mark of death, whether actual or anticipated.[24] As we have seen, fictional, poetic, and essayistic writings about photographs are by nature often elegiac, and Akhmadulina's writing on photography is no exception.

The elegiac tone of the opening of "Photographs from a Different Time" continues throughout the essay, as Akhmadulina takes the reader on a journey through the photographs that she pores over in the course of what she claims is a single night of writing. The space of Messerer's studio appears in several of the snapshots and represents an important gathering place for her friends, many of whom were major creative figures in the second half of the twentieth-century. For Akhmadulina, the studio has a life of its own: "Boris Messerer's studio gathered under its vaulted ceiling a large cast of characters and itself was one of these characters."[25] She devotes much of the essay to remembering individuals, not places. Her photographs represent primarily a list of losses—through death or emigration—of the many individuals figured in the images of the album. This list of casualties of time and circumstances includes young soldiers leaving to die in Afghanistan; the ordeals suffered by Andrei Sakharov and those who defended him; and the deaths of Stanislav Neigauz, Vladimir Vysotskii, Aleksandr Tyshler, and Nadezhda Mandelshtam; and the exits from the USSR of Vladimir Voinovich and Maia and Vasily Aksenov.[26] She concludes by offering thanks to those people—famous and unknown—who, in the words of her beloved bard singer Bulat Okudzhava, made up the "tiny . . . orchestra dedicated to love and devotion" in her life. The parenthetical remarks of the opening paragraphs about her passion for turn of the century photographs, juxtaposed with her raw meditations on much more recent images of more recent losses, suggest that increased temporal and personal distance from the subjects of photographs translates to a more comfortable and creative discourse around the images.

The photograph's function as memento mori arises in part from precisely the interplay of temporal realms and intersecting gazes—between photographic subject and photographer, and between the

photographic image and the viewer from a different time and place, along with all of the accompanying associations that the viewer brings to the photographic image and its subject. In the case of Akhmadulina's essay on Pasternak, "Litso i golos" (Face and Voice), a photographic portrait of Pasternak, taken in 1921—one that Akhmadulina's narrative persona refuses to look upon—is a metonymy of the memories the author shares of her personal encounters with other metonymic representations of the great poet: his face and his voice.[27] Akhmad ulina recalls her first encounter with Pasternak's face and voice and the magnitude and meaning of his work for her generation. The dramatic setting of the essay features her in close proximity to the 1921 Pasternak photo-portrait. Though she refuses to look upon it, she knows the portrait well, especially the way it encapsulates the entirety of Pasternak's experience: from his glorious childhood and education in Germany, to that of a beleaguered writer in the Soviet Union. She recounts her first encounters as a student with the voice, face, and majesty of this colossal figure in Russian poetry, and she feels a deep burden not to fall short of what she must do to honor his contributions to the life of art in the USSR. She notes the temporal layers of the photographic image—the fact that, while the gaze of the poet appears to meet her own gaze, it was looking into the lens of the camera belonging to a photographer from long ago. Yet the gaze is still strong, available to meet her own, though she resists his return gaze because it implies an immense personal sacrifice before the threats of state violence.

> I sit like this, I live like this, sitting in the place where I live and I have only to turn my head and suddenly I'll see this Face, the best of all the incredible faces that I have encountered and seen on this great earth. This face is a *masterpiece* (I write it in Russian) of the *creator* (I write it in lower-case, intentionally, because I'm not talking about God right now, not only about God, but about all the accompanying circumstances, the collaborators, the unknown assistants of the creator, the sculptor of this Face).
>
> I live, I sit, I don't turn my head. Maybe I'll turn it now and find out what price there is for this small gesture, to turn my head and see The Face. Nooooo, I can't.
>
> But the Face is looking at me. Not at me, of course, but at the lens of some photographer once (in 1921) and then at everyone, with an inquiring—though not reproachful—bewilderment.
>
> To not be guilty before this Face, before this gaze that

> reproaches no one for anything, before the inquiring meaningfulness of his eyes—my whole life has gone to this. I strove for this, yet here I sit, alive, and I can't turn my head, I don't dare. I must be guilty, then.[28]

In Sontag's words: "the record of photography is the record of change, of the destruction of the past."[29] Akhmadulina's writing on photography suggests that she feels this record of destruction especially strongly and that her relative privilege as a poet in the time and place in which she lived affords her a sense of terrible obligation. Born in 1937, at the height of the Terror, she nevertheless came of age as a poet in a time of relative freedom and great responsibility, standing before the project of looking at the truths of the terrible events of the recent past, of the atrocities of her own lifetime.

In Akhmadulina's writings on photography from the 1990s we see further evidence of her belief in photography's position as keeper of this record of destruction. Her fondness for animals brought her into contact with street photographers and their pets while on a writing trip to Yalta in 1990, not long before she began composing another essay, "Dedication to the Ladies and Gentlemen . . ." (Posveshchenie damam i gospodam . . .) about photographs taken on the eve of World War I. In letters to Messerer, she describes having her photograph taken by the enterprising street photographers with a variety of parrots and boa constrictors. The parrot seems to evoke Akhmadulina's sympathies; when the bird is removed to the other end of the shore, and she no longer has the chance to visit it, she laments both its disappearance and its sad state of servitude. Akhmadulina includes the photograph of herself on the beach posing with a parrot in a letter she writes to Messerer with a line that offers insight into her creative views on the power and limitations of photography—as opposed to other imaginative pursuits—as a form of capturing human experience in the world. "Happiness is an (artistically) conscious moment of existence [Osoznannoe (khudozhestvenno) mgnovenie bytiia—schast'e], but this printed moment is witness to our collective unhappiness—mine and the parrot's at the very least."[30] This formulation, "an (artistically) conscious moment of existence is happiness" is nearly identical to the phrase she would use in a 1996 essay looking back on her friendship with poet and theater director Pavel Antokol'skii (1896–1978). The essay is titled "Mig bytiia" (A Moment of Existence), and Akhmadulina here too draws this philosophical connection between consciously living moments of life as a key to

happiness: “There we sat: Zoya Konstantinovna, Pavel Grigor′evich and me, the lucky one. At that time I didn’t understand that I was the lucky one. Sadness had already consumed me, taken me, it was as if something was missing, something was bothering me. I didn’t understand then that that was it: a happy moment of my existence. Now I know that happiness is a consciously lived moment of life.”[31] It is telling that we can trace this characterization of happiness as a “consciously lived moment” (osoznannyi mig) back to the incident involving the parrot and Akhmadulina’s conception of happiness as the experience of a moment, while the tangible photograph, the image-object representative of that single moment of life is tinged with sadness and yearning.

After her unhappy ending with the parrot in Yalta, Akhmadulina describes in her letter an encounter with an exhibit of old photographs of Yalta, which also evoked in her deeply nostalgic descriptions:

> There is so much that I pity. Yesterday I looked through photographs of old Yalta (glass plates that were found in a Moscow landfill): a woman, clearly in search of some innocent fun, here sitting on a bench by the sea, here posing with a mustachioed companion in a gig, here by a waterfall, and there an unpleasant pudgy officer has sat down beside her. All around there are shops and signs, Tatars and Greeks, peddlers and boot shiners. A blurry sort of plot, once again assuming a full-blooded bulge: a cambric kerchief, the buttons on a blouse, the shine of an officer’s just-cleaned boot, the strength of an enterprising, bustling, glistening life.[32]

Messerer’s notes on this episode suggest that old photographs of prerevolutionary Russia were of particular interest to Akhmadulina, whose creative imagination took up the problem of a world that no longer existed and instead found ways to write such that she could somehow intervene and preserve that world through her creative practices and in her lines of verse. “Old photographs always moved Bella. She lovingly pored over them and before her the past in all its authenticity revealed itself through this objective witnessing. She valued all details that she noticed on those fading yellowed post cards. This was for her a cherished place, a lost place, but one that she was able to resurrect.”[33] In the essay that Akhmadulina wrote not long after the Yalta retreat, titled “Dedication to the Ladies and Gentlemen Captured by a Photographer in 1913 in N-Provence of the Great Russian Empire,” the narrative

perspective (both the "I" and its "eye") fixates on the last revelries of a group of aristocrats who are naive to the tumult and trauma that lay ahead for them with the oncoming outbreak of World War I.[34] Here again for Akhmadulina photographs present for the viewer a dark message of what lies ahead, if one chooses to look. The essay opens with epigraphs from Petrarch and Pushkin on the pain of living in the face of inevitable death. As in her remarks in "Photographs from a Different Time," Akhmadulina considers in detail the fate of prerevolutionary Russians at the turn of the century, individuals who could not anticipate the turn of historical events or the waves of death that would arrive with the onset of World War I.[35]

> Whoever they are, they have precisely one year left: for the unceasing revelry and celebration, for fireworks, and cavalcades, allegro balls and evening concerts, for amateur plays, and for love. Of course for love, as always—a fateful and special love, as never before—fateful and special in that summer of their last and final time of wellbeing.
>
> . . .
>
> If only they could know that seventy years later someone would step through the magnifying glass into their circle so that she could love them, admire them, and hide from them the fact that everything they saw as enduring, indivisible, unconquerable was doomed.[36]

In her imagined encounter with the men and women of the photograph, Akhmadulina's narrator is conflicted about whether and how it might be appropriate to issue a kind of warning to these individuals, to somehow unload her burden of knowing the truth about their lives and fates: that they would succumb to enemy bullets and premature death in the wars that would begin to ravage the country just one year later. "Three skeptical officers distracted from the wine by the photographer, one still hasn't unwrapped his cigar, is irritated by the pesky wrapper. Shall I tell them ahead of time that they will lose the war? Life is what, after all? Clearly theirs is devoted to Russia, but they will also lose this Russia. To tell, or not?"[37] Akhmadulina here is a well-intentioned voyeur, one who knows too much about the fate of those pictured in the image. In her imagined encounter with the subjects of the photograph, she demurs, unable to betray their idyllic revelry with news of their impending doom.

Akhmadulina seems drawn to, but also disturbed by, her voyeurism

vis-à-vis the individuals captured and preserved in the space of the photograph. For her, knowing the subsequent fate of those individuals whose lives were upended by the tumult of the Revolution and its aftermath is a powerful and unpleasant sentiment. In her lyric poem "A Snapshot," Akhmadulina uses a metaphor to liken the photographic image to a fossil preserved in amber, and she is repeatedly drawn to the protection and preservation aspects of the photographic image; at the same time, here too she imagines herself as a kind of time traveler, burdened with privileged information about the subject of the image who will soon face almost certain tragedy. Her desperate urge is to somehow intervene; in "A Snapshot" she calls on fate to protect and preserve the young Akhmatova, such that she may live to complete her lines, finish her task of witnessing and recording the tragedies and terror of Stalinism during her lifetime and transform it into a different form of preservation and witness—her verse.

This pull toward intervention is particular to Akhmadulina's creative approach to the photographic image. It is an approach that extends to both the poetic and prose meditations she writes on photographic subjects. This sense of communion with and a desire for intervention on behalf of the subjects of these old photographs from her place in the present repeatedly surfaces in her essays on photography and is one that will recur in her poetry. It is a plea present in the text of "A Snapshot," and it is one that will enable Akhmadulina to intervene creatively in discourse concerning the legacy of Tsvetaeva through her use of an ekphrastic description of an imagined photograph in her poem "I Swear."

In the Shadow of Marina and Anna: Akhmadulina's Photo-Poems

For Akhmadulina, describing photographs becomes a way to confront the legacy of her poetic predecessors. This process relates directly to her broader orientation toward these women poets—Tsvetaeva and Akhmatova—who came before her and who become the subject of her photo-poems. Akhmadulina did not meet Tsvetaeva in person, though she felt closer to Tsvetaeva's poetic persona and wrote more poetry dedicated to her. She did meet Akhmatova in person, despite efforts she made (out of shyness) to avoid it; she describes her encounters with Akhmatova in detail in an essay "Vsekh obozhanii bedstvie ogromno" ("The calamity of all adoration is enormous").[38] Akhmatova was a towering, intimidating presence in Akhmadulina's early years as a poet. The consonance of their

names was something of a point of kinship, but also tension for Akhmadulina, who was born with this surname; Akhmatova, by contrast, whose surname was originally Gorenko, took the pen name in honor of her Tatar grandmother.

In a short piece in *Vogue* magazine in 1977, Joseph Brodsky described what it was like for Akhmadulina to be a Russian poet in the shadow of Tsvetaeva and Akhmatova:

> One should not envy a woman who writes poems in Russia in this century, for there are two giant figures that haunt everyone who picks up the pen—Marina Tsvetayeva and Anna Akhmatova. Every once in a while, Miss Akhmadulina confesses to the almost paralyzing spell of these two over her and pledges her allegiance to them. In these confessions and pledges, it is easy to distinguish Miss Akhmadulina's bid for eventual equality. But the price of this equality is high enough for one to wish that Miss Akhmadulina never will be able to pay. For there is a great deal of truth in that cliché about art's demanding sacrifice, and there is very little evidence that art today is less carnivorous than at the time of Miss Akhmadulina's birth.[39]

In her 1973 poem "Noch′ pered vystupleniem" ("The Night Before a Performance") Akhmadulina writes of the simultaneous discomfort and urgency she feels about her poetic craft. Central to this is a sense of obligation to the generations of poets who have come before,[40] and she suggests here (and in other places) that her lineage extends back to Pushkin by the way of Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva. Her existence as a poet in relative comfort and even some degree of fame in the Thaw era troubles her. Hers is a position that she experiences with a double burden of shame and gratitude, a clear sense of indebtedness, privilege, and unworthiness vis-à-vis her poetic predecessors. She experiences the act of private writing as a form of prayer, a practice of honoring the tradition she has inherited. The act of public performance is one that is tantamount to a crime, to "being guilty of deception" (provinit′sia v obmane), though her ambivalence allows that this deception can take the form of convenience in service to continuing the tradition of Russian poetry; she is, in that sense, "deception's convenience" (udobstvo obmana).

Безгрешно рукою водить вдоль бумаги.

Писать—это втайне молиться о ком-то.
Запеть напоказ—провиниться в обмане,
а мне не дано это и неохота.
И все же для вас я удобство обмана.
Я знак, я намек на былое, на Сороть,
как будто сохранны Марина и Анна
и нерасторжимы словесность и совесть.[41]

It is not a sin to lead the hand across the page.
Writing is a secret prayer for someone.
But to read for the sake of spectacle is to be guilty of deception,
and that's not my role, for this I have no desire.
And yet for your sake I am the deception's convenience.
I'm a sign, a hint of the past, of the Sorot′,
as if Marina and Anna were somehow preserved
and word and consciousness were indissolvable.

Despite her ambivalence, her poetic craft is an indicator of the vitality of an age-old tradition, a "sign" (znak), a "hint" (namek) at the poetic past (byloe) and the river Sorot′, which flows through Pushkin's Mikhailovskoe and Trigorskoe estates. Akhmadulina feels an even closer kinship with the poets she calls by first name—Marina and Anna—whose spirits represent an inseparable amalgam of word and conscience.

Tatiana Aleshka studied extensively the influence of Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva on Akhmadulina's poetry. As evidence of Tsvetaeva's stronger influence on Akhmadulina, Aleshka offers the following quotation from a talk Akhmadulina gave on Tsvetaeva in 1978 remarking on the sheer emotional force of that poet's writing.[42] "Once I was trying to clarify for myself what, for example, is Tsvetaeva, what is she, for example, with relation to Akhmatova. I thought through this, comparing them simply as two miracles, on equal planes, and I thought: Akhmatova is harmony fully embodied and because of that she is, perhaps, of a heavenly sort of beauty. Tsvetaeva is *more* than harmony, but you're not allowed to be more than harmony—that's disharmony, which simply mustn't be."[43]

Akhmatova (1889–1966) is the subject of three poetic texts by Akhmadulina: "A Line of Verse" (Stroka, 1967), "A Snapshot" (1973) and "I envy her in her youth" (Ia zaviduiu ei molodoi . . ., 1974), as well as the essay "Vsekh obozhanii bedstvie orgromno," in which she describes the anxiety that accompanied her in-person meetings with the elderly Akhmatova.[44] In that essay on her personal encounters with Akhmatova,

her descriptions seem to gravitate toward the pictorial in their use of "lik" (face), "oblik" (countenance, appearance), and "profil'" (profile), such that the visual details become an almost outsized aspect of the elder poet's persona. "I had seen her twice: heavy-set, a face, appearance and a super-fine profile that absorbed the suffering and sickness. An image so famous, so glorified." As they rode in a car, Akhmadulina recalls: "Streetlamp, no streetlamp, light and shadow, I saw, and I couldn't see, but I saw a profile, a silhouette. Was is Modigliani? Altman? No. Was it Ospedaletti in 1912? . . . No, I was given that photograph much later."[45]

Akhmadulina's memories of these encounters with Akhmatova in the 1950s were written in 1996. This temporal distance between the events described therein and the time they were written down allows for this confusion about when, exactly, the photograph from Ospedaletti came into her possession, thus entering the visual narrative of Akhmadulina's creative imagination of Akhmatova. What is clear is that visual cues—the famous portraits of Akhmatova by Amedeo Modigliani and Nathan Altman, as well as the photograph that inspired the 1973 poem "A Snapshot" have by the time of the essay blended with the memories of her real-world encounters with the elder poet.

Though "A Snapshot"—Akhmadulina's poem describing this photograph of Akhmatova—was written later than "I Swear," her poem about a photograph of Tsvetaeva, this later text is a useful point of departure for considering how Akhmadulina orients to photographs within the space of her lyric poetry. This is in part because it accords well with other evidence of her philosophical orientation toward photography. Her reading of photographic texts, as in her essays on the subject of photography, is a profoundly nostalgic one, and one that focuses on the photograph's fixing of a moment in time that remains visibly present but is inaccessible to the viewer of the image. At the same time, we find in Akhmadulina an urge to engage with the past and to imagine for herself the possibility of reinhabiting these earlier times and places; she possesses an urge as well to intervene

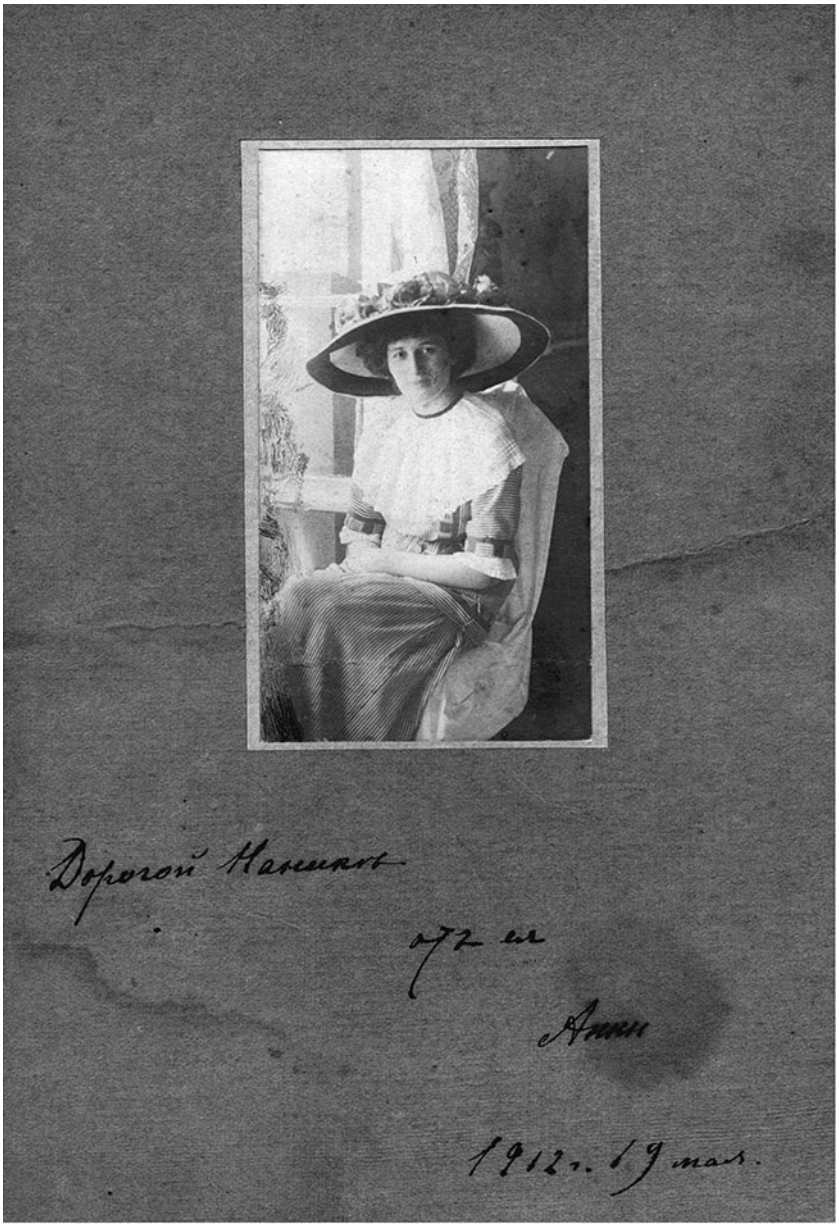


Figure 4.3. Anna Akhmatova, Ospedaletti, Italy, April 1912. Courtesy of the Anna Akhmatova Fountain House Museum archive, St. Petersburg.

in these moments, though she is well aware of the impossibility of acting on such an impulse.

"A Snapshot" responds to an actual photographic portrait of Anna

Akhmatova taken in 1912 in Ospedaletti, Italy.[46] The photograph from Ospedaletti is an image that Akhmadulina had in her possession at one time, and she describes it in an interview on the origins of the poetic text:

> I have much dedicated to Anna Andreevna . . . Once in Petersburg I received a photographic portrait of her, taken in Italy, with her autograph. On it was written: "April (with an old orthography "ѣ") 1912. Anna Akhmatova" and with a period at the end. In the photograph she was young, stunning . . . Then I later couldn't hold back and gave the photograph to the Pasternak family, or rather to Stasik Neigauz and it somehow disappeared. I just don't manage to hold on to such things for long . . . And so there you have it, the poem is called "A Snapshot." Initially, I thought that in giving it away it was gone forever, but then I saw some very similar images —I think it was in a non-Russian (foreign) journal—with just a slightly differently angled profile. I had almost the exact same picture, but with a different facial expression.[47]

This image depicts Akhmatova in a time and place so starkly different from what she would face during the Stalin years, when she would become the poet who witnessed and, through her poetry, captured the terror encountered by her generation. Although we do not have available the precise image that Akhmadulina recalls having in her possession, this portrait (figure 4.3), available with an autograph dated May 1912 (not April) and without the full signature, presents the closest we have available to the image Akhmadulina describes in her poem and interview.[48]

Снимок

Улыбкой юности и славы
лишь припугнув, но не отторгнув,
от лени или для забавы
так села, как велел фотограф.

Лишь в благоденствии и лете,
при вечном детстве небосвода,
клянется ей в Оспедалетти
апрель двенадцатого года.

Сложила на коленях руки,

глядит из кружевного нимба.
И тень ее грядущей муки
защелкнута ловушкой снимка.

С тем—через “ять”—сырым и нежным
апрелем слившись воедино,
как в янтаре окаменевшем,
она пребудет невредима.

И запоздалый соглядатай
застанет на исходе века
тот профиль нежно-угловатый,
вовек сохранный в сгустке света.

Какой покой в нарядной даме,
в чьем четком облике и лике
прочесть известие о даре
так просто, как названье книги.

Кто эту горестную мету,
оттиснутую без помарок,
и этот лоб, и челку эту
себе выпрашивал в подарок?

Что ей самой в ее портрете?
Пожмет плечами: как угодно!
и выведет: “Оспедалетти.
Апрель двенадцатого года.”

Как на земле свежо и рано!
Грядущий день, дай ей отсрочку!
Пускай она допишет: “Анна
Ахматова”—и капнет точку.

A Snapshot

With a smile of youth and glory
She has startled, but not repelled,
Out of boredom or just for fun
She sat as the photographer asked.

Just in prosperity and summer

In the eternal childhood of the heavens
April Nineteen Twelve
Greets her in Ospedaletti.

She's folded her hands on her lap,
And looks through the lacey halo.
And the shadow of her future suffering
Is captured in the snapshot's trap.

With that raw and tender April—written with a "iat"—
The image is combined,
As if fossilized amber,
She'll come through unharmed.

And the one who'll look much later
Will discover at the close of this age
That tender angular profile,
Forever preserved in a clot of light.

What calm and peace in this well-dressed woman,
In whose refined face and image
It's as easy to read tidings of her talent,
As to read the title of a book.

Who asked for himself this as a present?
This sorrowful mark
Imprinted without erasure smudge,
And this forehead and these bangs?

And what does she herself make of the portrait?
She'll shrug her shoulder: as you like!
And produce "Ospedaletti.
April, the year 1912."

How fresh and early it is on earth!
Oh future day, defer her pain!
Let her write out in full: "Anna
Akhmatova"—and drop a period on the page.

"A Snapshot" depicts a range of external details of Akhmatova's smile, dress, and posture in the photograph, but the lyric's apostrophe mostly

focuses on the way this image captures and preserves Akhmatova in a semblance of eternal peace, at a comparatively blissful time. The photograph was taken before the tragic years following the execution of her husband, the poet Nikolai Gumilev, by the secret police in 1921 and her life under Stalinism, which included enduring the arrest and imprisonment in the Gulag of her son Lev Gumilev and her second husband, Nikolai Punin. The poem's speaker marvels at the lightness and innocence of this time and place, and she expresses gratitude for the photograph's power to preserve—as if fossilized in amber—an image of the young poet in this impeccable form. In the opening line "A smile of youth and glory" (Ulybkoi iunosti i slavy), the noun is rendered in the instrumental case so that the reader is gently ushered into the encounter with the image—"by means of a smile." The attributes "youth" and "glory" to modify the smile seem to set the stage for the way that reflecting on this image draws together two temporal realms—this moment from Akhmatova's youth but also the viewer's understanding of her later fate, of the "glory" that would come with her mature writing, which would be celebrated most fervently after her death. The smile is one that is said to have startled the viewer (lish′ pripugnuv) but not repelled her (ne ottorgnuv). The image is arresting and alluring; it draws in the viewer, and the reader as well. Though Akhmatova is said to mainly be going through the motions of having her portrait taken (sela kak velel fotograf), there are many more layers of meaning that the lyric speaker must unravel in her encounter with this image.

The repeated use of "lish′" (just, simply) to suggest simplicity and harmony of the image also masks what we should read as suggestive of the limitations of the photographic image but also the power of poetic intervention. The moment captured in the image can embody only certain elements of Akhmatova's life and times, and yet encountering the image decades later through ekphrastic description places the lyric speaker in a position of having privileged information about the fate of the person whose face and pose is imprinted therein. There is much that the photograph suggests about Akhmatova's world in 1912, but the real power of the image is that it holds her in a space and time of profound innocence. Yet for the speaker, the difficult knowledge of what would happen to this poet in the ensuing years—the trials and purges of those closest to her, the writing "for the drawer," the poems censored, unsanctioned, texts that could not be permitted—is inescapable. It casts what feels like a visible shadow on the portrait, made explicit in the lines "I ten′ ee griadushchei muki / zashchelknuta lovushkoi snimka" (And the

shadow of her future suffering / Is captured in the snapshot's trap). If the 1912 image of Akhmatova is one that holds the elder poet in a time-space well before the events that lead to the composition of *Requiem*, it simultaneously suggests the history of the Terror and Akhmatova's future as a "poet of witness," who would work to preserve in verse the experience that Akhmadulina's generation would later bring to light and rehabilitate in the 1960s. Just as in Brodsky's photo-poetic writing, the future life of the image is a subtext that often pervades the texts of poems like "A Snapshot."[49]

It is worth exploring the problem of permanence and impermanence of the photographic image and how it is harnessed for aesthetic purposes in this text. In the interview about the photograph that inspired this poem, Akhmadulina speaks of losing and then finding the photograph again, suggesting a transience, an impermanence, a mystical return of the image. In the poem, by contrast, she attributes greater permanence to the image. This is achieved through a metaphor that likens the photograph to matter fossilized in amber.[50] It is as if, in Akhmadulina's poetic conception, photographs—like Bulgakovian "manuscripts [that] don't burn"—can survive or transcend physical destruction. Yet this notion of photograph as image preserved in amber contrasts sharply with Barthes' concerns in *Camera Lucida* about the perishable nature of the photograph:

> What is it that will be done away with, along with this photograph which yellows, fades, and will someday be thrown out, if not by me —too superstitious for that—at least when I die? Not only "life" (this was alive, this posed live in front of the lens), but also, sometimes—how to put it?—love. In front of the only photograph in which I find my father and mother together, this couple who I know loved each other, I realize: it is love-as-treasure which is going to disappear forever; for once I am gone, no one will any longer be able to testify to this: nothing will remain but an indifferent Nature.[51]

The extent to which the fragile materiality of the photograph is left untreated in this poem is counterbalanced by Akhmadulina's engagement with references to a different fragile form of cultural production: Akhmatova's poetry. Though present mostly in the subtext of this poem, as opposed to the more direct engagement with Akhmatova's work through epigraphic and in-text citation in poems such as "A Line of Verse" (Stroka) ("Doroga ne skazhu kuda . . .") or with a direct dedication

("To Anna Akhmatova") in "I envy her in her youth" (Ia zaviduiu ei molodoi . . .), the writerly tropes of "A Snapshot" are of critical importance to the project of preserving Akhmatova's memory and legacy.[52] Readerly and writerly practices merge with the photographic in this poem. The fusing of temporal planes is catalyzed by the combination of a photochemically preserved image of the elder poet and her signature, along with the indexical fixing of the date "April 1912" that, in its use of prerevolutionary orthography, is forever separated from all that followed in the wake of the 1917–18 revolt and reforms. Akhmatova is figured in "A Snapshot" not only as the person dressed and seated for a portrait but also as one whose features and future as a poet are legible in the image. This is especially true of the lines that liken the speaker's perception of the subject's poetic gift to the ease of reading the title of a book (What calm and peace in this well-dressed woman, / In whose refined face and image / it's as easy to read tidings of her talent, / as to read the title of a book). A similar emphasis on the creative act is present in the way the narrative voice figures the act of autographing the photograph (Let her write out in full: "Anna/ Akhmatova"—and drop a period on the page) as a metonymy of the poet's broader acts of poetic creation.[53]

By invoking the idea that the visual and temporal markers are preserved in the photograph as if in amber, Akhmadulina draws on a different, natural technology of preservation, affording the photographic image an elevated permanence (to which Barthes might object), one that should secure the possibility of rediscovery by future generations. Furthermore, Akhmadulina's use of verbs in multiple tenses has the effect of repeatedly transporting the reader from the present of the photo session to the time of the poem's composition during the Thaw, back to the dark years of Stalin's Terror and into Akhmadulina's world once again. Masleeva notes the use of verbs in multiple tenses—present, past, and future (sela, slozhila, gliadit, pozhmet, vyvedet, dopishet)—throughout the poem, suggesting the kind of mental time-traveling that photographs incite in their viewer.[54] Akhmadulina's speaker, too, moves between the moments of the photoshoot, Akhmatova's future troubled fate, and her own place as a viewer of the photograph decades later, who looks on with the privilege and burden of knowing all that took place in those ensuing years.

If the opening stanzas of "A Snapshot" praise the photo's ability to preserve and protect this peaceful time, the poem's final lines instead seek an intervention; the speaker begs for fate to intervene in the face of the terrible times to come. The speaker hopes the divine will act to

preserve her and give her sufficient time to complete her signature, which stands in here for much larger acts of witnessing and writing the experience of her people.

Akhmatova's image, identified by the poem's title as "A Snapshot," is connected to an existing historical photographic portrait. What is particularly fascinating about comparing the poem about a real photograph of Akhmatova with a poem about what is almost certainly an imagined photograph of Tsvetaeva in "I Swear" is that Akhmadulina's use of notional ekphrasis of the photograph in this earlier text from 1968 takes advantage of photography's aura of authenticity, while at the same time allowing for a creative reimagining of Marina Tsvetaeva at a time when that poet's fragile legacy was only beginning to be returned to the public eye and Russian cultural memory.

Клянусь

Тем летним снимком: на крыльце чужом,
как виселица, криво и отдельно
поставленном, не приводящем в дом,
но выводящем из дому. Одета

в неистовый сатиновый доспех,
стесняющий огромный мускул горла,
так и сидишь, уже отбыв, допев
труд лошадиный голода и горя.

Тем снимком. Слабым острием локтей
ребенка с удивленною улыбкой,
которой смерть влечет к себе детей
и украшает их черты уликой.

Тяжелой болью памяти к тебе,
когда, хлебая безвоздушность горя,
от задыхания твоих тире
до крови я откашливала горло.

Присутствием твоим: крала, несла,
брала себе тебя и воровала,
забыв, что ты—чужое, ты—нельзя,
ты—Богово, тебя у Бога мало.

Последней исхудалостию той,
добившею тебя крысиным зубом.
Благословенной родиной святой,
забывшею тебя в сиротстве грубом.

Возлюбленным тобою не к добру
вседобрым африканцем небывалым,
который созерцает детвору.
И детворою. И Тверским бульваром.

Твоим печальным отдыхом в раю,
где нет тебе ни ремесла, ни муки,—
клянусь убить Елабугу твою,
Елабугой твоей, чтоб спали внуки,

Старухи будут их стращать в ночи,
что нет ее, что нет ее, не зная:
«Спи, мальчик или девочка, молчи,
ужо придет Елабуга слепая».

О, как она всей путаницей ног
припустится ползти, так скоро, скоро.
Я опущу подкованный сапог
на щупальца ее без приговора.

Утяжелив собой каблук, носок,
в затылок ей—и продержать подольше
Детенышей ее зеленый сок
мне острым ядом опалит подошвы.

В хвосте ее созревшее яйцо
я брошу в землю, раз земля бездонна,
ни словом не обмолвясь про крыльцо
Мариниого смертного бездомья.

И в этом я клянусь. Пока во тьме,
зловоньем ила, жабами колодца,
примеривая желтый глаз ко мне,
убить меня Елабуга клянется.

I Swear

On that summer snapshot: taken on someone else's porch,
like a gallows, crooked and separately
positioned, not drawing you in
but leading out of the house. You are dressed

in some harsh satin armor,
tight around the huge muscle of your throat,
and there you sit, already spent, having sung out
the horse-like labors of hunger and sadness.

I swear on that snapshot. On the weak angle of your
child-like elbow, with a surprised smile,
which death uses to lure children to itself
and decorates them with marks, as evidence.

I swear on the pain of remembering
how I gulped your airless grief from
the suffocation of your lines,
I coughed until my throat bled.

I swear on your presence: I stole, carried off,
Took you for myself, I robbed,
forgetting that you are not mine, you are forbidden,
you are of God, God has too little of you.

And by that last emaciation which
Got you in the end with its rat tooth.

I swear: on the blessed Motherland herself, though
she abandoned you in a cruel orphanhood;

And on your reckless and beloved African
I swear, that great genius of unprecedented good,
Who, now as a statue, watches over children.
I swear by those children. And Tsverskoy Boulevard

And your own sad rest in heaven, where
there is neither craft nor torment for you—
I swear: to kill Yelabuga, your Yelabuga
So that our grandchildren can sleep soundly.

Old women will still frighten them at night, not knowing,
thinking she doesn't exist, saying:
"Sleep little boy and girl, go quietly, for
blind Yelabuga is coming."

With its whole tangle of legs, yes will it crawl
Headlong toward me quickly, speedily.
But I shall bring down my boot heel on it
And crush its tentacles without official verdict.

Put my weight on my heel, and my toe-cap into
The back of its neck, and hold it long
Then the green juice of its young
will burn the soles of my feet with their sharp poison

The ripened egg in its tail
I'll throw it into the bottomless earth,
speaking not a word of the photo and
the porch of Marina's deathly homelessness.

On this I swear. Even in the darkness
by stench of silt and the toads in the well
training its yellow eye on me,
Yelabuga swears an oath to kill me.

"I Swear" is one of several works—in poetry and in prose—that Akhmadulina wrote about Marina Tsvetaeva.[55] "I Swear," however, has proven to be something of a challenge for scholars writing on the topic of Tsvetaeva's influence on Akhmadulina, to such an extent that they have tended to sidestep the poem almost entirely in favor of considering other works that are more readily available for interpretation. Tatiana Aleshka, Daria Masleeva, and Sonia Ketchian—all scholars who write explicitly about the influence of Silver Age poets—make no more than a passing reference to "I Swear" in their scholarship. Scholars who do describe the photograph of Tsvetaeva that opens the 1968 poem do so in terms that suggest that this poem, like "A Snapshot," is based on a real, existing photograph. Ivan Nichiporov, for example, summarizes the image in the following way: "The central image of the poem 'I Swear' (1968) is one of the final photographs of Tsvetaeva—already the Yelabuga period—where she is captured 'on someone else's porch//like a gallows, crooked and separately//positioned, not drawing you in//but leading out of the

house.'"[56] The central motivating question here is whether this description is based on a real photograph of Tsvetaeva. It might seem something of a strange proposition at first glance. After all, the notion that Akhmadulina would write about an imagined photograph in "I Swear" is surprising, since in other instances in which she writes about photography, she references real photographs, artifacts with which she had direct interactions. In general, we think of Akhmadulina as a poet whose imagery is often grounded in a faithful depiction of concrete reality. Indeed, her other works that invoke photographs—"A Snapshot," "Dedication . . .," "Photographs from a Different Time," and "Face and Voice"—are all based on real photographs with which she came into contact. However, a closer investigation of the image that opens "I Swear" suggests that the photograph at the heart of this poem is almost certainly an imagined image, a poetic device constructed by Akhmadulina in such a way as to make us believe that the lyric speaker is contemplating an actual photograph of Tsvetaeva. I argue that the image could not have existed.

Consider in more detail the description of the photograph in "I Swear." The poem unfolds in a similar way to "A Snapshot," with a detailed description of an image that is identified as a photograph of a poetic predecessor. The ekphrastic description of the photograph offered by the speaker is given special force because it comes in the form of a powerful oath. The poem's title operates as part of the text itself: "I SWEAR // On that summer snapshot." As the poem unfolds, the lyric speaker swears on the photograph—and on an extended series of related (instrumental case) objects and situations—to kill "Yelabuga," a monster that shares the name of the town where Tsvetaeva ended her life. The monster is figured as a hybrid of monsters from literature including Baba Yaga, Koshchei the Deathless, the Gorgon Medusa, and the Typhon. Elaine Feinstein, who interviewed Akhmadulina on several occasions, notes that the poet took pains to point out that the inhabitants of Yelabuga were innocent and that what the speaker was vowing to destroy was the vicious small-mindedness that left Tsvetaeva so alone and friendless in 1941; it was an enemy that Akhmadulina could recognize in her own society.[57]

Before the speaker details the battle she will engage in with the mythical Yelabuga, the poem opens with lines that describe a photograph of Tsvetaeva, on a porch that is not her own. The way the door is framed here reminds the speaker of a gallows, an ominous reminder of Tsvetaeva's suicide by hanging in 1941. The frame of the door is not inviting ("*ne privodiashchem*") but seems to repel the poet from its

threshold ("*vyvodiashchem iz domu*"). Tsvetaeva is figured in a satin garment that is likened to chain mail armor fitted tight across the throat. Although the tightness at the throat foreshadows Tsvetaeva's suicide, Akhmadulina elsewhere uses the corporeal image of the throat to stand in for Tsvetaeva's poetic voice, which here, in her final days or hours, is tightly restricted by the complete absence of opportunity to publish her works.[58] Her posture in the photograph bears the weight of the terrible twin burdens of hunger and anguish, and her child-like elbows bend weakly, her mouth in a surprised smile, not of happiness, but one that the speaker reads as a mark of death.

Why do I claim the lyric is not based on a real photograph? Based on my extensive knowledge of extant photographs of Tsvetaeva and in consultation with other Tsvetaeva specialists we are aware of no photograph that depicts Tsvetaeva in this way. Furthermore, it seems unlikely, given her dire material circumstances in Yelabuga in 1941, that she would have been thusly photographed. Even if such a photograph were taken, Akhmadulina would probably not have had access to it; the only publications in the USSR at that time that included photographs of Tsvetaeva were ones that featured headshot portraits from much earlier. The 1961 *Izbrannoe*, the first book of Tvetaeva's poems published posthumously in the USSR (and the first volume of her works published in her homeland since her 1922 *Versty*), contained a single faded portrait of the poet from 1924 in the frontispiece; the remarkable uncensored publication produced in the artist and writer community in Tarusa, *Tarusskie stranitsy* (*Pages from Tarusa*), included a single portrait of the poet from 1914; and the 1965 edition of the *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* includes several portraits also all from her youth; there is no photograph from Yelabuga among them. By 1968 Akhmadulina had traveled abroad, including a trip to France in 1965, where she interacted with the émigré community and may have perhaps encountered photographs of the poet there, though certainly not images that were taken after Tsvetaeva's return to the Soviet Union in 1938.

What did become of photographs of Tsvetaeva taken after her return to the USSR, photographs that were taken in Yelabuga in particular? Even now, with access to the full archive of Tsvetaeva's life, works, and images, there are few photographs from later in her life. One photograph from 1941 had been acquired before 1961 by the Central State Archive for Literature and Art (TsGALI, now RGALI)—even before the bulk of Tsvetaeva's archive was transferred there. In her study of the rehabilitation of Tsvetaeva's legacy between 1941 and 1961 Svetlana

Saltanova details how the archival materials came together from many sources across Europe and the USSR. Saltanova details how TsGALI staff member Roza Nikolaevna Fedulova, who had compiled TsGALI's Pasternak archive in the early 1960s, had discovered many mentions of Tsvetaeva, as well as letters and photographs of Tsvetaeva among the Pasternak materials. Spurred by these bits of evidence, she began in 1961 to assemble the beginnings of a Tsvetaeva archive at that institution. She wrote to Tsvetaeva's daughter, Ariadna Efron, on August 11, 1961, to initiate contact and begin a conversation that would eventually lead to the Tsvetaeva archive in Ariadna's care being entrusted to TsGALI in 1975 (and which was kept sealed until 2000). She mentions in the letter that TsGALI already had in its possession photographs from 1914, 1935, 1937, and 1941, some of which have Tsvetaeva's autograph, as well as letters to Vera Merkur′eva written in the summer of 1941.[59]

Could the photograph of Tsvetaeva in Akhmadulina's poem be this rare 1941 image? If not, are there other photographs to which the poem might be referring? If we put aside the complex historical circumstances of Tsvetaeva's photographic archive, we find that there is imagery in the poem that recalls details from other, mostly earlier extant photographs of Tsvetaeva, and most researchers with whom I have consulted are reminded of one image or another. For example, the now well-known photographs of Tsvetaeva in a doorframe on a broad porch taken in Koktebel in 1913 could be a tangential or spectral source for the porch imagery; there are similarities between the poem's doorframe-gallows and the way the doorway frames Tsvetaeva in figure 4.4 and her sleeve just covering her elbow.

The constricting collar might arise from the dress in a photo with Sergei Efron from 1911, and images of summer and of children could arise from a different photograph from 1935 where she is seated on stairs with her son Mur (figure 4.5). One of the last known photographs of Tsvetaeva from 1941 is the one that TsGALI had acquired by 1961 (figures 4.6 and 4.7). It, too, shares details with the image described in the poem—her prematurely aged face, her exposed elbow—but is certainly not a precise match. The group photo was taken near Alexei Khruchenykh's dacha in Kuskovo, outside Moscow. Not only is the pose not before a doorframe—it is a painted background used by a street photographer—but it was not taken in Yelabuga. Despite the resemblance of some details of these photographs with the one described in Akhmadulina's poem, no photograph of Tsvetaeva exists that corresponds with what is figured in the poem.

Figure 4.4. Group photograph from Maximilian Voloshin's dacha, Koktebel', 1913. From left to right: Elena Kirienko-Voloshina, Vera Efron, Sergei Efron, Marina Tsvetaeva, Elizaveta Efron, Vladimir Sokolov, Mariia Kudasheva, Mikhail Fel 'dstein, and Leonid Feinberg. Image courtesy of the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), file 1190-2-224, no. 3.

We proceed, therefore, with the assumption that this poem is not inspired by a real photograph, that the photograph described here is an imagined image, a creative device from Akhmadulina's poetic arsenal. Because of the way the description of the photograph feels so deeply grounded in reality, one way to make sense of the evocation of a powerful, but imagined, photographic image at the center of "I Swear" is to read the text in light of a similar phenomenon that had long been used to explain the so-called Winter Garden photograph of Barthes's *Camera Lucida*. The existence of this image was debated for decades by scholars, some of whom argued that the

Figure 4.5. Georgii Efron and Marina Tsvetaeva, Favières, France, summer 1935. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-1-49 no. 4.

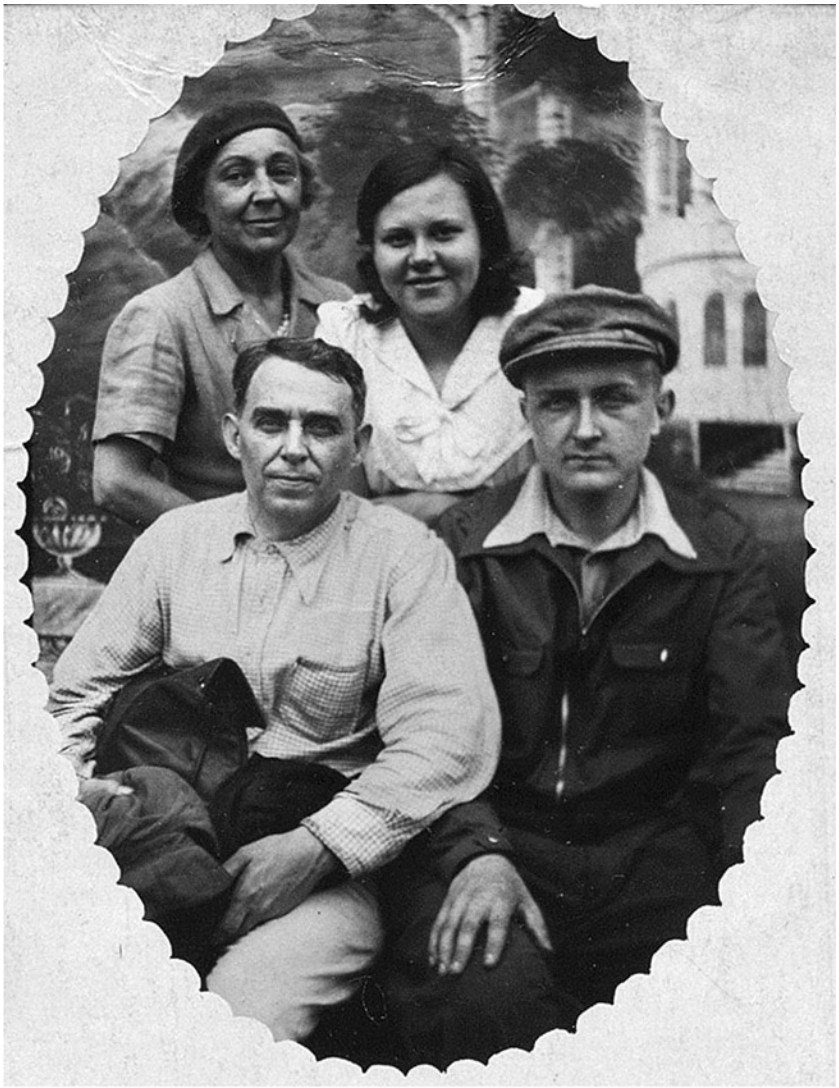


Figure 4.6. Marina Tsvetaeva, Lidia Lebedinskaia, Alexei Kruchenykh, and Georgii Efron, Kuskovo, June 1941. Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-1-49.

image Barthes describes in the text—the Winter Garden photograph of his mother as a child—is not based on an actual photograph. Kathrin Yacavone's chapter "Lost and Found: The Winter Garden Photograph" from her 2012 monograph *Benjamin, Barthes and the Singularity of Photography* clarified once and for all the true origins of the description of the photograph of Barthes's mother that occupies a central place in

Camera Lucida. Yacavone proved that

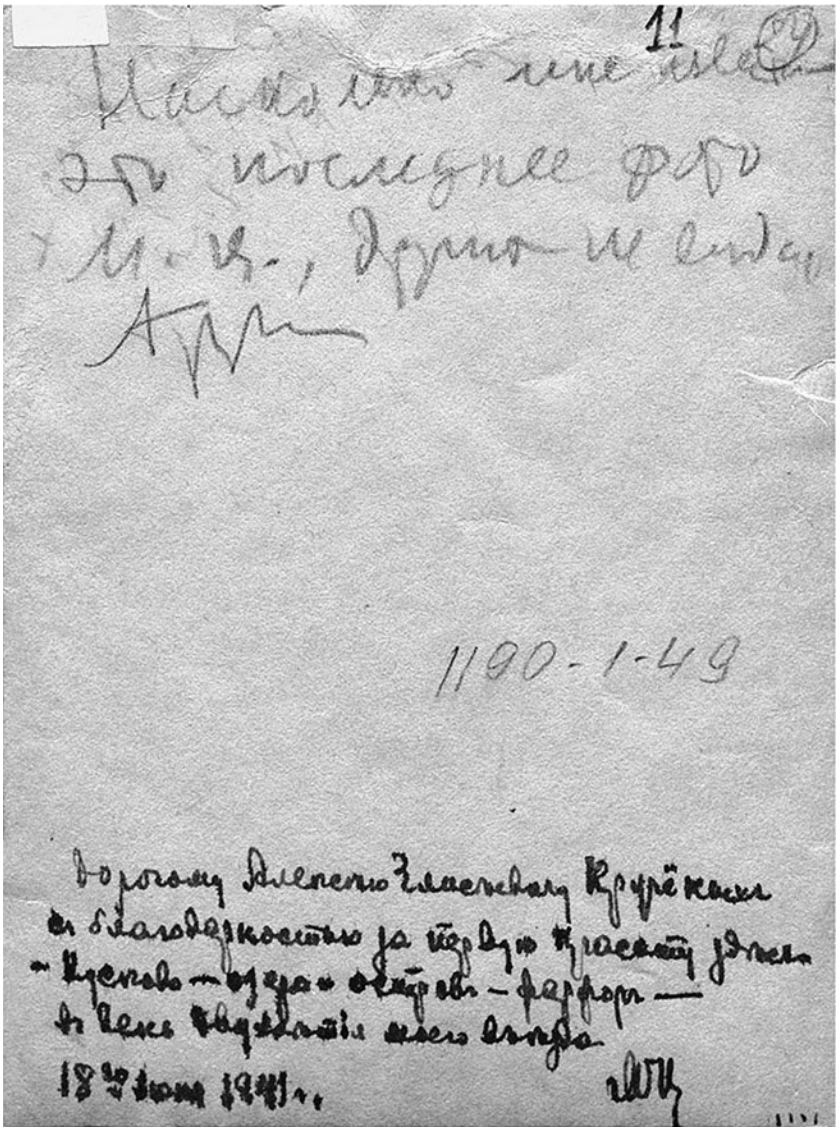


Figure 4.7. Marina Tsvetaeva's autograph "To dear Alexei Eliseevich Kruchenykh, with gratitude for the first beauty here—Kuskovo—the lake and the island, the porcelain. On the second anniversary of my return. June 18, 1941. M. Ts." Image courtesy of RGALI, file 1190-1-49ob [reverse].

the image was based on a real photograph, yet the reasoning of scholars

who surmised earlier that it was an imagined image is useful in explaining the implications of Akhmadulina's imagined photograph of Tsvetaeva. Several scholars argued that the Winter Garden photograph was a kind of creatively imagined hybrid, bearing some resemblance to a family photograph of Barthes's mother as a child (known as "The Stock") taken not in a winter garden, but together with her older brother and grandfather, and a photograph of Kafka as a child in a winter garden that is used in Walter Benjamin's *A Short History of Photography*.[60]

The extent to which Tsvetaeva's photograph in "I Swear" feels so closely connected with the photographic can be explained in part by the way Akhmadulina's writing seems to do what some argued Barthes had done in writing about the Winter Garden photograph. Akhmadulina assembles a set of photographic *puncta*, perhaps from her imagination alone, but perhaps also from other photographic source material. (The punctum is, in Barthes definition, the part of a photograph that pricks, pierces or moves you, as opposed to the studium, the background, the mundane.) As Margaret Olin writes on the possibility of an imagined hybrid image of Barthes's Winter Garden photo: "[Barthes's] effort . . . illustrates other highly significant aspects of the *punctum*: the *punctum* may be the composition; the *punctum* may be forgotten; the *punctum* may be in a different photograph. The example illuminates an important aspect of memory: the deception at its heart, its ability to embroider and change, to be displaced . . . But the mistaken memory opens up the possibility of comprehension."[61] Regardless of how we conceive of the inspiration for the details that constitute it, the imagined photograph described in Akhmadulina's poem is meant to be read not as an avenue for extended metaphor (as in Khodasevich's *Sorrento Photographs*), but as a material artifact, the object of the lyric speaker's gaze, which draws her into that tragic space and ultimately enlists her to fight the wretched monster Yelabuga in her own realm, to avenge the death of her poetic forebear. The question that remains is why does Akhmadulina invoke a photograph here when she might have rendered the scene simply as a moment from historical time reconstructed in her poetic imagination? What does she swear on "that summer snapshot" and not simply on "that fateful summer day"?

Akhmadulina invokes a photographic snapshot, in part, because of photography's persistent and unsettling connections to thinking about death and dying, its "inventory of mortality," as Sontag called it.[62] By figuring Tsvetaeva as a photographic image in Yelabuga, Akhmadulina doubles down on engaging the narrative of the poet's tragic death.

However, she does not leave us focusing on the poet's tragedy; instead, the photographic rendering of Tsvetaeva permits Akhmadulina to reengage with the elder poet's biography through what we perceive to be highly reliable documentary evidence of the poet's existence. Relevant here is Lisa Saltzman's *Daguerreo-types: Fugitive Subjects, Contemporary Objects*, which offers probing insights into photographic subjectivities in works such as W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, in which photographs serve to "secure identity for figures with an otherwise unstable sense of self."[63] Saltzman demonstrates that beyond their documentary function, the photograph in many contemporary works "asserts itself as a guarantor of identity, whether genuine or fabricated."[64] Saltzman's work is relevant to the discussion of the photo-poems by Akhmadulina, a poet who was faced with the task of reconstructing the unstable histories and biographies of figures such as Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva, who were being discovered anew in the 1960s and 1970s. Engaging with a photographic representation of her poetic predecessors permits Akhmadulina an enhanced sense of verifiable authority as she constructs her own subjective biographical correctives to the still unstable narrative of these poets' lives.

Akhmadulina performs this reimagination of Tsvetaeva's life not entirely without guilt. Sontag has written that photography makes its subject vulnerable to such an extent that taking or "reading" a photograph amounts to an act of symbolic violence: "To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them that they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed."[65] Akhmadulina admits to a certain degree of violence inherent in looking at this image of Tsvetaeva in "I Swear." The poet seems to transform the photograph into something akin to an icon, and she confesses to stealing this image, co-opting it as her own, denying God's right to Tsvetaeva's soul.

Присутствием твоим: крала, несла,
брала себе тебя и воровала,
забыв, что ты—чужое, ты—нельзя,
ты—Богово, тебя у Бога мало.

I swear on your presence: I stole, carried off,
Took you for myself, I robbed,
forgetting that you are not mine, you are forbidden,

you are of God, God has too little of you.

Akhmadulina's "anxiety of influence" in this stanza reveals the way that the opportunity to reimagine the lyrical lives of the previous persecuted generation of poets was both a chance to rehabilitate them, but also a profoundly selfish act, an act of betrayal; she and her fellow poets were stealing, co-opting the words, the lines, the legacy of the lost generation for a different, selfish purpose.

So how to answer the central question of this chapter: why imagine Tsvetaeva's last days as a photograph, and not simply as a vision in the mind's eye? First, the device works to lend particular authenticity to this lyrical encounter because of the evidentiary force of photography's indexical relationship to its subject. In addition, there is also the elegiac stance: this is a text that engages the story of Tsvetaeva's death, and photography is so well suited to holding a figure in the space of life, while always suggesting and anticipating its end. As Minogue and Palmer have noted, "In confronting [an] ekphrastic re-creation of the photographic image, we confront the actual human body at the moment of life and of death."[66]

But there is also a third element. By writing about a photograph, the poet can directly, tangibly confront her forebear, engage her tragedy, but also manipulate it; she can engage in the act of reframing and rewriting Tsvetaeva's (at the time) still unstable biography. This is permissible not only because of the subjectivity of photographic representation but also because of how speech acts—the power of speech and of silence—operate in this poem. Akhmadulina uses a powerful speech act to make the photo appear to us: "I swear on that summer photograph." But by the end of the text, following a section that anticipates how she will battle the mythical creature Yelabuga, part of the poet's mourning of Tsvetaeva's tragedy involves a kind of repair or revision of the image through a refusal to speak.

В хвосте ее созревшее яйцо
я брошу в землю, раз земля бездонна,
ни словом не обмолвясь про крыльцо
Мариниого смертного бездомья.

The ripened egg in its tail
I'll throw it into the bottomless earth,
speaking not a word of the photo and

the porch of Marina's deathly homelessness.

The main point of contrast between "A Snapshot" and "I Swear" is that in the latter, the image must be destroyed or defaced or at least not spoken of, discarded from memory and the spoken word in order to fully vanquish it. Here the concern is not with preserving a time of innocence or even a time of tragedy, but of destroying a murderous social force. We see this in the line near the end of the text: "And not say a word of the porch [in the photograph]. / I will not speak of Marina's deathly homelessness." By refusing to speak of the porch of "Marina's deathly homelessness," the speaker imagines that part of defeating the Yelabuga monster means effectively muting one of the final moments of Tsvetaeva's doomed existence.[67] In doing so, the speaker is better able to situate herself as the bearer of this poetic burden, for the monster Yelabuga is now pitted against her. Indeed, the monster's gaze has been reversed; it is now firmly fixed on her.

примеривая желтый глаз ко мне,
убить меня Елабуга клянется.

training its yellow eye on me,
Yelabuga swears an oath to kill me.

What is the effect of refusing to speak of the photograph, and of Tsvetaeva's tragic end? It ensures that Tsvetaeva's death will not be the sole defining feature of her legacy. This was a central concern for Akhmadulina in engaging poetically and historically with Tsvetaeva's creative biography. In a talk she gave in 1978 at the Literaturnyi muzei, Akhmadulina pushed back against a tendency to focus on Tsvetaeva's tragic end to the exclusion of all else. Referring to Nadezhda Mandelshtam's words about Tsvetaeva, Akhmadulina expressed the following:

> "A fate more terrifying than Marina Tsvetaeva's I do not know," said a woman [Nadezhda Mandelshtam]—a person whose awareness of suffering we, so to speak, in this day and age must consider exhaustive. And yet suffering and death—that is only one part, one aspect of Tsvetaeva's fate. That is not all there is to her story. Tsvetaeva's fate gets played out twice: the irreproachable performance of her life's tragedy, and the irreproachable embodiment of each and every moment of that tragedy in all that

has become sacred for us.[68]

By refusing at the end of the poem to speak of the haunting photograph that anticipates Tsvetaeva's death, the lyric speaker of "I Swear" works to consign the death narrative to oblivion; in essence, she works to bury it together with the Yelabuga monster and does so successfully. By imagining and subsequently destroying the image that embodies Tsvetaeva's tragedy, Akhmadulina effectively recasts the narrative of the poet's death, discarding the photograph and taking up the project of finding a voice to shape a newly emerging biography of Tsvetaeva, a poet along with others of her generation, who were in the late-Soviet period being rediscovered, reimagined, and reenvisioned.

Chapter 5

Darkroom of Dreams

Poetry, Photography, and the Optical Unconscious

As photographic images have become ubiquitous in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century cultural experience, poetic responses to the medium moved beyond fascination with an image's photochemical relationship to its subject or nostalgia for the way that photographs aid us in remembering the past. Some of the poets active in the final decades of the Soviet Union, along with those who followed their path, do continue to employ a more conventional photo-poetics, even as the testamentary value of photographs and their ability to convey "truth" have been widely discounted. Some contemporary Russian poets have been drawn to the modernist impulses of writers like Boris Pasternak to disrupt traditional notions of stilling time and fixing images with cameras. They challenge ordinary modes of thinking and seek to access what Walter Benjamin called the "optical unconscious" by directing their interest in cameras and lyric poetry to extend the eye's capabilities and mind's reach.

This chapter considers two such poets—Arkadii Dragomoshchenko (1946–2012) and Andrei Sen-Sen′kov (b. 1968)—and their use of photographic practices and aesthetics to expand poetry's potential. Born in Potsdam, Germany, Arkadii Dragomoshchenko grew up in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, and lived in St. Petersburg from 1969, when it was called Leningrad, until his death in 2012 at age sixty-seven. Though sometimes grouped together with the Metarealists of the 1980s, a group of poets who strove to harness metaphor to create new imaginative worlds,

Dragomoshchenko himself never identified as a Metarealist.[1] His conceptual work shares in their aim to access through writing certain unconventional modes of seeing and being in the world. More important perhaps than his connections to the Metarealists, his association with the American L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E poets suggests that Dragomoshchenko's writing works to harness the power of language to seek out connections between objects and experiences that are not visible through ordinary means of perception. In addition to writing poetry, prose, essays, and criticism, Dragomoshchenko was also an avid photographer, and this practice is central to his aesthetic and philosophical innovations.

Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, who was born in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in 1968 and has lived in Moscow since 2002, belongs to the generation after Dragomoshchenko's. A practicing obstetrician and Belyi Prize–winning contemporary writer, he, too, experiments with poetry, photography, visual art, and musical forms, frequently composing cycles of miniature poems and image-texts that engage experiences of violence through a poetics of distortion in both visual and verbal forms. Situating Dragomoshchenko and Sen-Sen′kov both in the contexts of contemporary Russian photo-poetic writing and within the theoretical framework of the optical unconscious demonstrates the enduring relevance of photography for poetic writing in Russian and lays the groundwork for new scholarly approaches to photo-poetic encounters in contemporary Russian poetry.

The Space of Sleep and Dreams: Contemporary Russian Poetry on Photography

> Within the dark interior of the camera is an hallucinating eye enchanted by the passing image of an emotional face or pigeons circling under the sky. It sees things one can't discern sufficiently and that are on their way to expiration, but the way is so long as to be unimaginable except as an instantaneous, blazing flash in an otherwise soft black depth that isn't a space but a plunging of space too dark and empty to see as anything at all.
>
> —Lyn Hejinian, "Everything Is Imminent in Anything"

Theoreticians of photography frequently assert that the camera registers things that are imperceptible to the human eye. Cameras resemble the eye in the sense that they manipulate focus and depth of field through a mechanical lens, but the mechanics of cameras are fundamentally

different from the way humans process visual stimuli. To understand what the camera may make available to us visually that is distinct from unmediated visual perception, it is useful to understand an aspect of human visual perception known as foveal vision. The fovea is the part of the retina containing the highest concentration of cones. It is the area where visual acuity is the highest. The fovea is responsible for our experience of vision that is clear, detailed, and in color. The fovea offers the brain a small subset of the visual field in color and in precise detail, inverted by the lens of the eye. However, the rest of the visual plane arrives to the occipital lobe blurred and in grayscale. Humans experience vision in more color and detail than the eye perceives because the brain works to create the rest of the picture using information available from the fovea, from peripheral vision, and from expectations we hold about what we might see based on prior experience, knowledge, and memory of how things look.

Lyn Hejinian attributes to the camera a power to "see things one can't discern sufficiently," but her thoughts on the nature of photographic vision go beyond the difference between what is captured in a viewfinder and what is available to the brain through foveal vision.[2] Hejinian figures the camera as accessing experiences that lie outside the reach of the conscious mind. The interior of the camera is in her description a "hallucinating eye" that draws on fascination, imagination, and unconscious or irrational modes of thinking. This mode of mediated visual perception brings things seen and unseen into contact within a space-time resembling a metaphorical black hole, a "soft black depth that isn't a space but a plunging of space too dark and empty to see as anything at all." Hejinian makes a familiar connection between photography and death in her reference to the camera's way of capturing "[things] that are on their way to expiration," but this mode of vision made possible by the camera is one that erases vision as it draws the mind into a world much deeper and darker than what we access with the conscious mind and the physical apparatus of sight.

Hejinian is an American poet of the L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E school, a writer whose work has intersected with contemporary late- and post-Soviet Russian poets since she first traveled to the Soviet Union in 1983 and met Dragomoshchenko, with whom she subsequently collaborated on creative intellectual projects.[3] Hejinian's meditations on photography's strange and unsettling mode of vision build on aspects of the medium's physics and metaphysics that have excited the imagination of late- and post-Soviet Russian poets. Hejinian highlights here the limitations of the

human eye and the camera's potential for accessing other modes of thinking, including the unconscious.

What seems to accelerate in the late- and post-Soviet period in terms of poetic writing on photography is an interest in the way photography makes it possible to access unconscious cognitive processes. This chapter addresses a unifying thematic problem: the way that poetry uses photographic motifs to access experiences of the unconscious that manifest in visual form. In the same way that creating a "photograph of the soul" is possible only in the poetic imagination, as discussed in the introduction to this book, writing that connects the photographic with the space of dreams and the unconscious allows for a photographic imaginary not bound by the photograph's supposed indexicality.

Many poems in Russian draw a connection between photography and the image-making that happens in the space of sleep and dreams. This surprising formulation of photography's relationship to the unconscious can be found in Vera Pavlova's book of poems *Childhood Albums: Grown-up Poems*. Pavlova (b. 1963) writes in her poem "Morning Prayer" (Utreniaia molitva), "Poems are photographs taken in sleep," alternatively translated as, "Poems are photographs made in a dream" (Stikhi—fotografii, sdelannye vo sne).[4] She suggests that photography and poetry are equal within the altered consciousness of sleep and dreamscape. The connection to sleep is referenced in writing on photography by the late-Soviet poet-photographer of the Meta-realist school, Aleksei Parshchikov (1954–2009), who makes a similar suggestion about the unconscious in an essay devoted to his photographic practice. He writes that "photography has a visionary task and is closer to the state of sleep and dreams."[5] Both Pavlova and Parshchikov suggest that photography allows us to bring into being in visual form things that we cannot typically conceive without the help of altered states of consciousness.

We can also include here the fragment analyzed in chapter 3 from Joseph Brodsky's *Roman Elegies* in which the poet takes up the *exegi monumentum* paradigm to speak of a lasting legacy built in verse. In the process, Brodsky draws a parallel between his future self-preservation in ink on the page and the way most people take up the camera to capture and preserve their image for the future. Here, too, the photographic process is figured as "falling asleep in an embrace with a Leica [camera]."[6] It is dreams that are processed through the lens, allowing for moments of self-recognition upon waking in a longer, future life. We can read this longer life as taking the form of memories, lines of verse, or photographic images.

One theoretical tool for conceptualizing how photography is figured as a mode of seeing that resembles the state of sleep and dreams is Benjamin's notion of the optical unconscious. Shawn Michelle Smith and Sharon Sliwinski's 2017 edited volume, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*, revisits and revitalizes this idea to explore—across a diverse literary landscape—ways in which photography mediates our experience and knowledge of the world in unconscious ways.[7] In his "Little History of Photography" Benjamin writes: "It is another nature that speaks to the camera rather than to the eye: 'other' above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious."[8] Smith and Sliwinski assert that Benjamin was "keen to explore how the technological processes of photography could reveal aspects of existence that elude our conscious grasp."[9] In the same essay the theorist writes, "It is through photography . . . that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis."[10]

In 1936, Benjamin expands on this notion of the link between photography and the optical unconscious: "Moreover, these two types of unconscious [the optical and instinctual] are intimately linked. For in most cases the diverse aspects of reality captured by the film camera lie outside the *normal* spectrum of sense impressions. Many of the deformations and stereotypes, transformations and catastrophes which can assail the optical world in film afflict the actual world in psychoses, hallucinations, and dreams. Thanks to the camera, therefore, the individual perceptions of the psychotic and the dreamer can be appropriated by collective perception."[11] In what ways do late- and post-Soviet poets appropriate this poetics of the unconscious through photographic metaphor or their own photographic practice? How do optical deformations merge with the space of altered psyches through poetic writing? And what do these challenges to conventional image-making offer to advancing a new frontier for lyric poetry? Photo-poetic writing by contemporary poets Dragomoschenko and Sen-Sen'kov demonstrates how photography can operate as a portal to unstable and irrational worlds built in lines of verse.

Arkadii Dragomoshchenko's Photographic Unconscious

Есть сон такой,—не спишь, а только снится,
Что жаждешь сна; что дремлет человек,

Которому сквозь сон палит ресницы
Два черных солнца, бьющих из-под век.

There is a dream in which you do not sleep,
But dream of longing for sleep; you doze
And through a dream two black suns
Pound your eyelids and burn your lashes.
—*Boris Pasternak, "In the Forest" ("V lesu")*

Like his contemporaries Parshchikov and Ivan Zhdanov, Dragomoshchenko's deep and abiding interest in photography both informed and was informed by his poetic practice in significant ways. Dennis Ioffe, writing on the creative dialogue between Dragomoshchenko (figure 5.1) and the experimental Petersburg photographer Boris Smelov, finds in these two figures a common aspiration to illuminate aspects of experience that elude simple, visual apprehension. "As a semi-professional photographer, Dragomoshchenko has much in common with Smelov: rather than just creating archive images, both of them aim to reveal something that playfully hides in the metaphysics of the depicted city, as well as something that indirectly corresponds to our subconscious dream-universe and the collective memory of the historico-geographical setting."[12]

In his theoretical writing on photography, Dragomoshchenko seems to reject many commonplace notions of photography as a means of preserving images of moments of past experiences that we then carry with us into the future. He writes instead that the motivation to photograph has less to do with preserving and archiving experience than we might typically imagine.

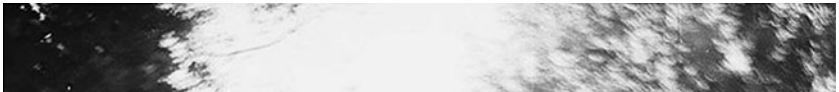
> We take photographs not for the purpose of *saving, not forgetting* (that is, not losing) something or other, and not in order to populate the world's archive with yet another image of something [that] evaporates at the very moment that vision encounters it . . . [T]he desire "to photograph" that which is not subject to the jurisdiction of the eye, of light, shadow, chemistry, printing arts [poligraphy], time, memory, hope, etc., . . . is in reality a means to get a "visually clear" sense of a "mental figure," imparting confidence in the reality of one's own existence, when for some reason the need arises for such a confirmation and *repetition* of that, perhaps, ideal tautological process, in reality by no means extracting something from something, but completely and utterly

changing the direction of the gaze.[13]

For Dragomoshchenko, photography's appeal has much to do with accessing the self through the visual apprehension of the other. While this is palpable in his own photography (figure 5.2), it is perhaps more evident in his verse. For example, a voice quoted in a poem from his *Ksenii* cycle tells us:

. . .“Мне хотелось
стать фотоснимком того, кто фотографирует меня
идущим во снах, постоянно снимающим паутину с лица.”

. . . “I felt like becoming a photograph
of the person photographing me—me who walks in dreams—
constantly pulling a cobweb from my face.”[14]



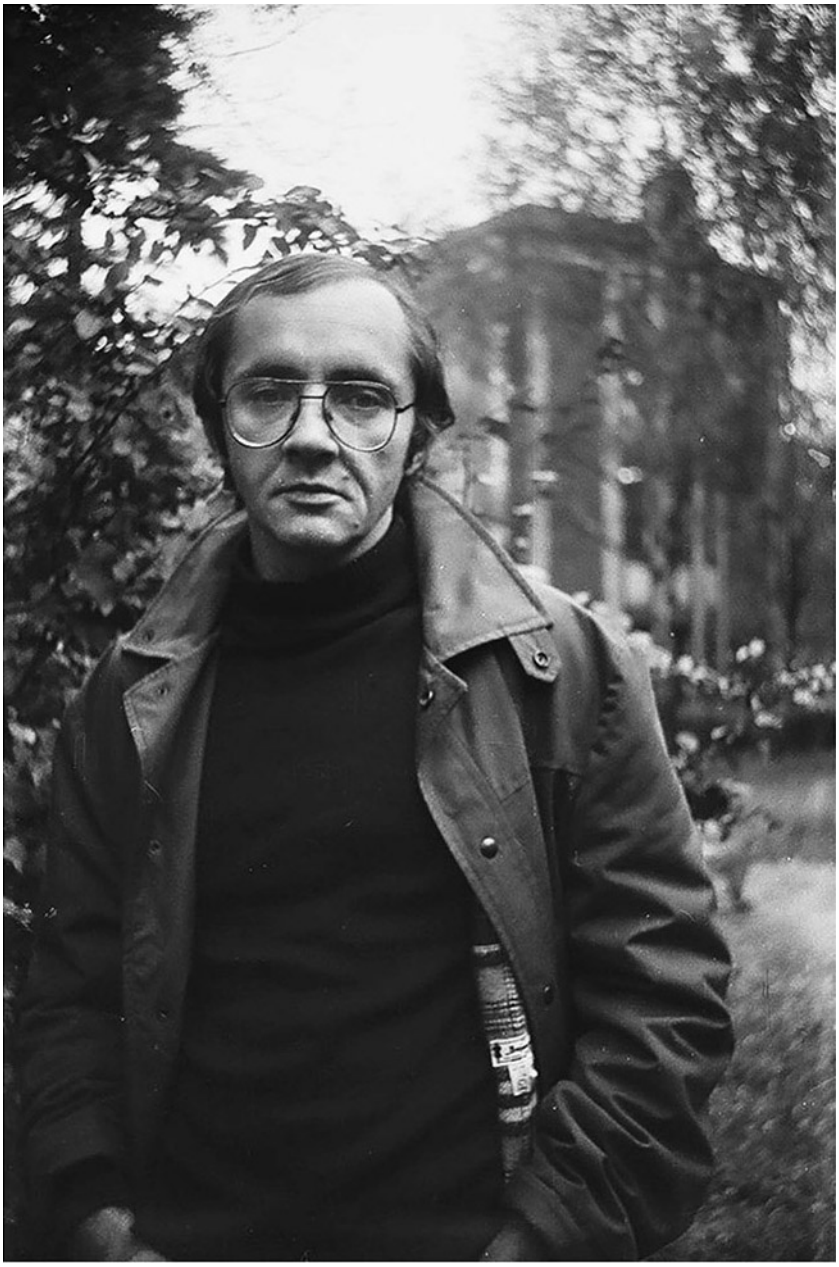


Figure 5.1. Portrait of Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, 1982. Photograph by Ostap Dragomoshchenko, the poet's son. Image courtesy of Zinaida Dragomoshchenko.

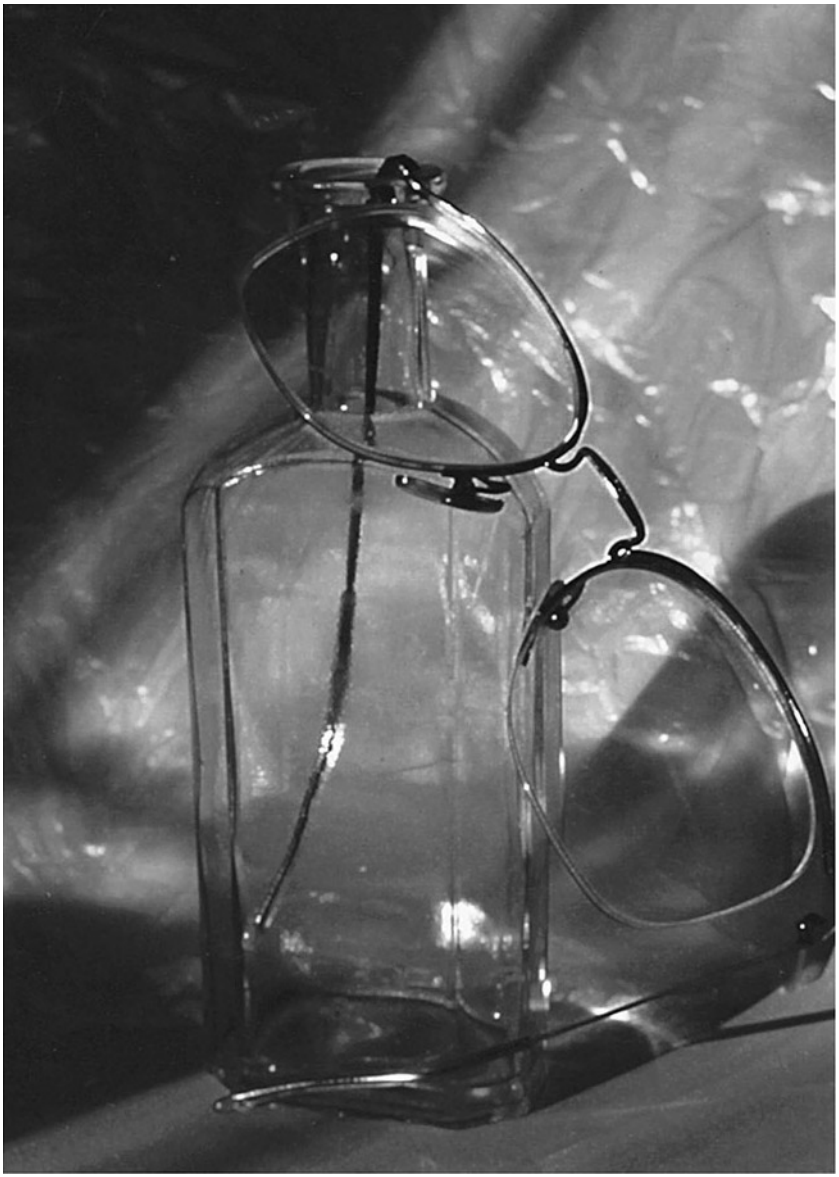


Figure 5.2. "Glass". Photograph by Arkadii Dragomoshchenko. Image courtesy of Zinaida Dragomoshchenko.

Dragomoshchenko also rejects the notion of the photograph capturing aspects of the self that root it in the past or project it onto a Barthian "future death." Rather, he argues that the essence of the self that is available to us through photography is located in a state of ontological

inbetweenness. "We have a desire to *examine ourselves, by means of the photograph*, looking into the frame, while the desire to decisively conjoin the view from inside with the view from outside means to join together both 'future' and 'past,' to remove the 'between,' which is impossible since it is only in that 'between,' in that desire to join one thing with the other, that we are doomed to find ourselves. We are that 'between.'"[15] The title of Dragomoshchenko's poem "Sny, kotorye vidiat fotografov" ("Dreams That Photographers Envision" or "Dreams Photographers Appear To" in Bela Shayevich's translation) is compelling for this exploration of the optical unconscious for several reasons.[16] The first is because of the way the poet gives photography access to the unconscious realm of dreams through the poem's title. Dragomoshchenko employs here one of his characteristic syntactical inversions, subverting our expectations of who is seeing and who is being seen. Though we might expect "photographers" to be the subject of the verb "to see," "photographers" stands as the direct object in the accusative case. In this title, it is the dreams that see or envision the photographers. The first twelve lines of the poem establish themes of optical and geographic displacement, language atrophy, and the way the agency of vision here collapses into itself, into the very apparatus of sight.[17]

Сны, которые видят фотографов
шелкография для гипса ноги Анатолия Барзаха
"Умираем." Значит ли, что цветы никнут, как.
Означает ли, что крошатся многословием пепла—
а мы в других странах и нет паспорта,
транспорта, какая-то Касабланка, станция.
Тронь что-либо, а потом, много спустя,
после расслоится «тем временем».
Одно "лишь." Значит ли, что жест мерцает
сквозняком в переходах, где точке
не суждено преступить меру ряби,
когда ты равен сумме зрачка и влаги;
закат в ней вогнут залогом. Воздух темен—
кто дышит им? Черств и сомкнут.[18]

Dreams Photographers Appear To *a silkscreen for Anatoly Barzakh's leg cast*

"We are dying." Does this mean that flowers are wilting, how.

Does it mean they are crumbling with the prattle of ash—
while we are in other countries, without passports,
no transportation, some Casablanca, a station.
Touch anything and then, much later,
"in the meanwhile" will stratify afterwards.
Just "merely." Does it mean that the gesture shimmers
like a draft in a passage, where a point
can never surpass the measure of ripples,
when you equal the sum of your pupil and moisture;
the sunset curled into it like a pledge. The air is dark—
who breathes it? Clenched and stale.[19]

To make sense of this poem within the context of the optical unconscious, we must ask what is meant by "dreams that see photographers." The title of the poem draws us into a realm in which dreams encounter the photographic.[20] But in Dragomoshchenko's inversion it is the dreams that have optical agency. Instead of photographers directing their cameras at will, it is photographers who appear as the visual subject of the dreams. Another poem from Dragomoshchenko's *Ksenii* cycle contains lines that suggest an unexpected relationship between photographic seeing and the subject's self-conception:

Мы видим лишь то,
что мы видим,

лишь то,
что нам позволяет быть нами -
увиденным.

Фотография отказывается
принять в себя то,
что в изучении нас
было ею же создано.[21]

We see only what
we see

only what
lets us be ourselves—
seen.

The photograph refuses
to let into itself
what it created by studying us.

Applying the logic of these lines to the title "Dreams That See Photographers," we can see how the title reinforces Dragomoshchenko's unusual conception of the relationship between photography and the optical unconscious. If it is true that seeing enables something to be seen, and dreams see photographers, then it follows that photographers make it possible for dreams to be seen. Photographic practice here makes possible the perception of dreams. In other words, photography brings the realm of the unconscious—the figure of dreams—into being. The poem's subtitle, "A Silkscreen for Anatoly Barzakh's Leg Cast," further reinforces the destabilization of the object of the photographic gaze. To make sense of the figures of the optical unconscious in this poem, we need to know something about the photographic process as it relates to the silkscreen printing process.

Silkscreening has to do with the displacement of surfaces. The transfer of a film-positive image onto a photosensitive emulsion layer is a displacement of surface area. That emulsion is then placed over a screen, and the image transparency is placed over it; the area is exposed to light, and the part of the emulsion not blocked by the image design hardens. Then, the emulsion is washed from the unexposed stencil area. This space is later pressed against the fabric-covered screen, and ink is forced through the mesh with a squeegee to create a transfer print. Silkscreening employs a photochemical process to create the stencil through which ink is pressed into the screen, which results in a print. But the silkscreen process effectively removes the index from the photochemical process: the film-positive image need not originate in an encounter between light-sensitive material and a real-world photographic subject. This is another kind of displacement or another kind of subversion of expectations that reinforces this pull away from photographic indexicality.

One final aspect of this poem—and of the silkscreen subtext in particular—that offers a link between Dragomoshchenko's photo-poetics and the notion of the optical unconscious is the importance of the fabric screen in the image-transfer process. Stephanie Sandler and Mikhail Iampol'skii each noted the importance of mesh, gauze, and translucent fabrics in many of Dragomoshchenko's photographs. As we can see from his iconic mesh and pin image used for the cover of Dragomoshchenko's

book of poems, *Tavtalogiia*, this kind of fabric has enormous creative appeal for this poet-photographer (figure 5.3).

Iampol′skii notes that the netting of threads has the effect of blocking vision, to an extent, while still allowing for things—objects—to pass through it.[22] Sandler goes a step further, noting the way that these complex surfaces have the effect of conjuring the inner workings of the mind. She

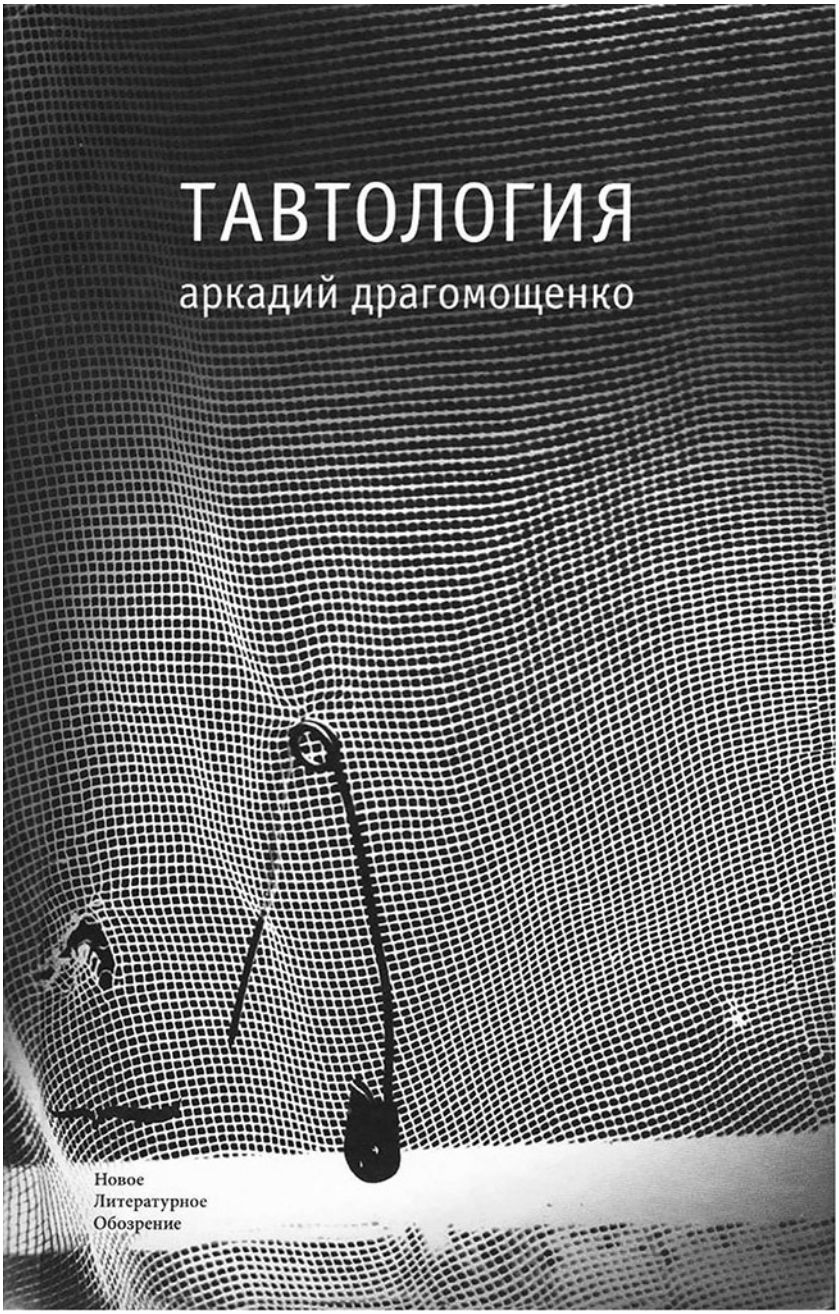


Figure 5.3. "The Pin" (cover image for *Tautology*). Photograph by Arkadii Dragomoshchenko. Image courtesy of Zinaida Dragomoshchenko.

writes: "Dragomoshchenko's photography, at least in these examples, displays not the impulse to use photography to catch something that *is* (Roland Barthes's definition in *Camera Lucida*). Rather, it's always a kind of second-order representation in the photograph, so that the photograph is the idea of the thing, the representation of our mind's work. Each photograph becomes a mind's assertion of its own reality."[23] A silkscreen mesh also operates as a permeable surface that, in conjunction with a photochemically rendered trace on the emulsion layer, allows us to contemplate things that are easily seen alongside the things hidden largely below the surface and out of sight. However, as if to ensure that we understand that Dragomoshchenko is much more interested in unseen and unconscious experiences, the final lines of the "Dreams" poem once again subvert our expectations: the inking of the transfer print is not fulfilled in the poem's final lines:

> Ничто
> не омрачает руку, тем паче белое поле тушью.
>
> Nothing
> darkens the hand, no ink falls on the white field.

The printing has been suspended; the expected image transfer is left unrealized in the space of this darkroom of dreams.

Andrei Sen-Sen′kov's Photographic Portraits of Pain

Sen-Sen′kov's photography-inspired poems extend the idea of the optical unconscious to give voice to fear, anxiety, and stories of ordinary violence in the modern urban world. Sen-Sen′kov's poetry often takes the form of cycles of miniature, fragmented texts written in blank verse. The poems' exploration of everyday experience in an aggressive, urban setting mirrors the poet-photographer's camera works in important ways. His photographs are nonrepresentational, distorted visions of light and shapes that seem as if they were taken through the lens of a microscope, presenting the world in which we live in jarring, unrecognizable forms. Sen-Sen′kov's theme and variations on the optical unconscious center on seeing the unseeable. He achieves this by visualizing unimaginable worlds in his photographs, and by constructing surprising tales of violence and urban decay in poems inspired by the photographs of others.

Understanding Sen-Sen′kov's larger poetic practice is key to making sense of his poetic relationship to the photographic; his miniature, minimalist, fragmented, predominantly blank-verse poetry mimics the photograph's way of capturing a moment of human experience in the form of a stilled, partial, fragmented, and cropped vision of the world. His poems are often grouped in cycles (analogous to the photo album), and he draws inspiration from everyday life and from a broad range of sensory experiences. Though Sen-Sen′kov's far-ranging source material runs from musical to medical, the visual world is of primary importance for his poetry; critic Danila Davydov describes his poetry as "ideal reading for regular visitors to the Museum of Cinema" (ideal′noe chtenie dlia zavsegdataev Muzeia kino).[24] In interviewing Sen-Sen′kov, writer and critic Linor Goralik suggests the following astute characterization of the role of the visual within his poetic world: "It often seems to me in reading your poems that you've managed to construct (or somehow magically invent) this amazing optical device. You look through this instrument at the same objects we look at. The objects, while remaining completely recognizable within the framework of our world, for you suddenly take on these unbelievable, other-worldly qualities."[25] In a 2018 interview with Vladimir Korkunov, Sen-Sen′kov describes his poetics as a creative process that would thrive in the subconscious psychic world of dreamscapes: "I recently told someone that I'd make a good screenwriter of dream sequences. I know how to do that, how to see things in unexpected places, so that everything sparks, shimmers and doesn't burn out. Like in a dream."[26]

In her essay "The Lonely Fate of Bicycles" (Odinokaia sud′ba velosipedov), Anna Golubkova addresses the way the visual in Sen-Sen′kov's creative world intersects with the intangible world of emotions. She argues that poetry for this writer functions as "emotional commentary on an aesthetic impression that he has experienced."[27] Indeed, any aesthetic experience can become for Sen-Sen′kov a portal into a world of emotional and even unconscious exploration. The works he labels "visual poetry" (vizual′naia poeziia)—texts typically composed of primitive computer drawings of dots, lines, ovals, and other shapes that merge with fragmented poetic text in unusual ways—operate in a similar fashion, forcing the reader to look in a different way, to see unfamiliar images on terms dictated by the accompanying text.[28]

Sen-Sen′kov is a practicing photographer, and his photographs often present surrealist portraits of seemingly microscopic worlds (figures 5.4 and 5.5). They are magnified, X-ray-like prints, made even stranger by

their use, at times, as illustrations accompanying text.[29] Both poetry and photography for this writer are means of taking ordinary everyday experiences and transforming them into a strange almost unrecognizable world. He has compared his creative work to the visual disorientation of looking through a microscope and seeing a whole other world appear before your eyes. The subject might be the most ordinary object but, mediated through a powerful lens, the vision becomes completely new, surreal, and unrecognizable.

Figure 5.4. “Lezvie cherno-belogo dozhdia” (Blade of a Black-and-White Rain), 2005. Photograph by Andrei Sen-Sen′kov. Image courtesy of Andrei Sen-Sen′kov.

Figure 5.5. "Dvukhseriinyi konets fil′ma" (A Two-Part End of a Film), 2000. Photograph by Andrei Sen-Sen′kov. Image courtesy of Andrei Sen-Sen′kov.

In addition to his literary activities, Sen-Sen′kov works full time as a doctor, specializing in pediatrics, acupuncture, and ultrasound

diagnostics (figure 5.6). Ultrasound technology turns out to be another instance of a mediated form of photographic vision that engenders textual narratives for this writer.

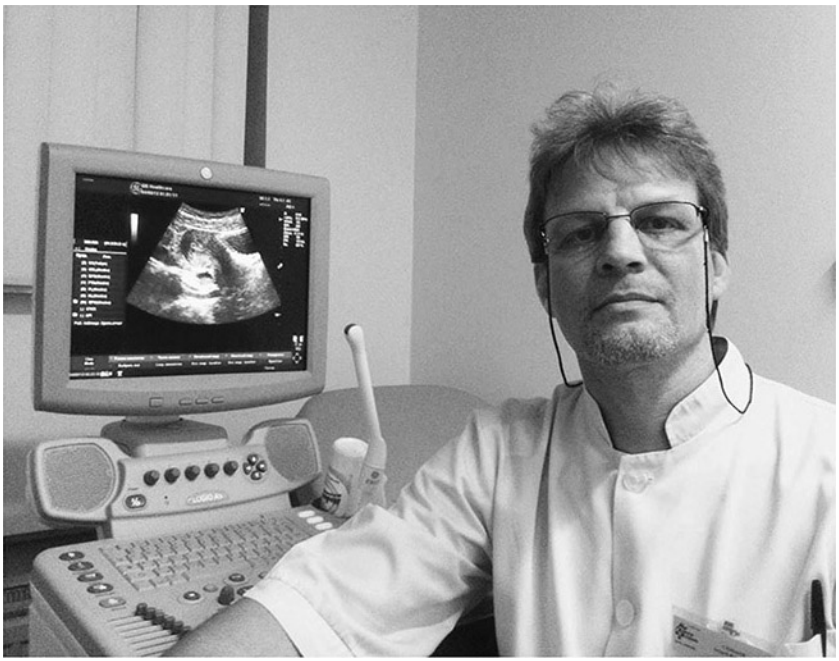


Figure 5.6. Andrei Sen-Sen′kov at work, with an ultrasound machine. September 2013. From the poet's Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10201968553724229&set=t.1496710835&type=3&theater. Used with permission.

Ultrasound technology, which generates a picture by visualizing the echoes of high-frequency sound waves, is an apt metaphor for Sen-Sen ′kov's poetry, which also draws on sound-play to create otherworldly visual imagery, which ultimately has life as its central theme. In the same interview with Goralik, the interviewer suggests that ultrasounds are a similar "apparatus for seeing the unseeable." Sen-Sen′kov agrees that this technology is its own kind of literary form, one that can excite the imagination, or craft portraits of pain: "Ultrasounds are my 'literature for money,' but they too are literature. With a patient, you're not allowed to make up stories about what you see [dopridumyvat′ uvidennoe nel′zia], but for yourself, sometimes you think this way. And sometimes you'd really like to create an alternative story for the patient too, like when you look at a pregnancy at three months and there isn't a heartbeat."[30] This is

a powerful example of the way that, in Sen-Sen′kov's creative world, image and text are almost interchangeable, and that imaginative storytelling—in pictures and in words—gravitates toward difficult and painful moments of human experience. If there is a single photography-related principle that shapes Sen-Senkov's poetic writing, it is this: photography's rhetoric of pain. For Sen-Sen′kov, reading and writing are acts of violence, leaving behind physical traces and long-lasting scars. As he told Zakhar Prilepin in a 2007 interview, when asked about which writers have made the most lasting impression on him: "Everything we have read, read now, and will read in the future leaves scratches, dents, burns, goose-bumps. You learn from some writers what to do, and from others what not to do."[31] This statement about the physical scars that literature engenders resonates with a central notion articulated by Susan Sontag in her books *On Photography* and *Regarding the Pain of Others* concerning the way that photography makes its subject vulnerable to such an extent that it amounts to an act of violence. She writes: "To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them that they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed."[32] This idea resonates in the poems and photographs that make up Sen-Sen′kov's cycle *John Glassie's Broken Photographs* (*Slomannye fotografii Dzhona Glessi*), in which Sen-Sen′kov's poetic response to photographs of abandoned bicycles consists of meditations on ordinary violence in the hostile urban world.

John Glassie's 2004 book, *Bicycles Locked to Poles*, features eighty-seven photographs of abandoned bicycles in the author's East Village neighborhood of New York City. The images are grouped into four parts, with each section containing increasingly disfigured remnants of the formerly functional bicycles. By the final pages of the volume, readers witness the bent wheels and twisted frames of these discarded, forgotten, rusted-out objects, pinned by various locks to poles, and stripped of most of their component parts. As a line from Sen-Sen′kov's semi-ekphrastic poems states, the images are "bicycle[s] at the limits of recognizability" (velosiped do neuznavaemosti). A chart printed on the inside cover of Glassie's volume catalogs the presence or absence of each of the major component parts of the bikes featured in the photographs. Beyond this chart, Glassie's photographs are not labeled or captioned in any way; the only other text in the book is an epigraph, a quotation from Marvin Minsky's *The Society of Mind*, which presents itself as an allegory for the limitations placed on individual freedoms of action and thought. The

epigraph reads: *"Birds can fly, unless they are penguins and ostriches, or if they happen to be dead, or have broken wings, or are confined to cages, or have their feet stuck in cement, or have undergone experiences so dreadful as to render them psychologically incapable of flight*." Glassie's photographs of abandoned, dismembered bicycles are striking, even haunting, because of their metonymical connection to their human owners. The bicycles, like Minsky's birds, point to broader human loneliness and suffering, conditions endemic to a deteriorating urban landscape.

Sen-Sen′kov's cycle *John Glassie's Broken Photographs*, written in 2008, was inspired by a selection of Glassie's photographs that the Russian poet discovered online.[33] The poems grapple with the problem of violence in what Sen-Sen′kov calls our "world of extreme aggression" ("I live in a world of extreme aggression" [ia zhivu v mire zapredel′noi agressii]).[34] His signature minimalist poems arise from the pain and neglect captured in Glassie's images. Sen-Sen′kov builds a cycle of lyrics that delve into contemporary culture's destructive preoccupations with speed and competition, technology, false representation, and material aspiration. The images of abandoned bicycles, transformed within Sen-Sen′kov's poetic consciousness, represent acts of violence—large and small—that we inflict on ourselves, and on those who live among us.

It is curious that the damaged visual and verbal components in Sen-Sen′kov's poetic cycle are infused with language suggestive of a certain innocence and childhood play. Just as a bicycle begins as a child's plaything and ends—at least in Glassie's visual rendering—as a neglected, dismembered piece of urban detritus, Sen-Sen′kov's poems blend the rhetoric of war, violence, and abuse with sounds and visions of childhood. Images of tricycles, puppies, toy guns, and model airplanes fall victim to gross physical and psychological disfigurement brought on by war, amputation, mental illness, and bodily injury. The cycle opens by layering scenes from *The Wizard of Oz*—the wicked witch's bicycle-to-broom transformation, falling houses, and the Emerald City—which emerge from the image of a green bicycle with limp, disfigured wheels (figure 5.7)

изумрудный велосипед феи убивающего домика
уже больше никуда не поедет
останется в зеленом городе
будет притворяться
разбитым растением очков
с двумя близорукими листьями[35]

the emerald bicycle of the killing-house fairy
will never ride again
it will remain in the green city
and pretend to be
a shattered eyeglass plant
with two nearsighted leaves

The second half of the lyric imagines the bicycle at once as a strange green plant and a pair of shattered eyeglasses. The connection to eyeglasses recalls both the shattered glasses in the famous scene from *Battleship Potemkin*, along with the opening lines of Vladimir Mayakovsky's narrative poem *Vo ves′ golos* (*At the Top of My Voice*), in which the poet-speaker cries to the scholar-teacher of the future, "Professor, / take off your bicycle-glasses! / I myself shall tell/ about my time/and about myself " (Professor, / snimite ochki-velosiped! / Ia sam rasskazhu o vremeni / i o sebe). The Futurist poet Mayakovsky writes from a historical moment that sought to merge human and machine, whereas his postmodern descendant, Sen-Sen′kov, illuminates the human factor within the mechanical through vignettes inspired by the metonymic relationship between a bicycle and its owner.

Figure 5.7. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*. Image courtesy of John Glassie.

Continuing to blend diminutive lexical forms and childhood images with the rhetoric of pain, the third poem from Sen-Sen'kov's cycle characterizes the transition from childhood to adolescence as the move from tricycle to adult bicycle, likening this process to puppies having their tails docked for aesthetic purposes, thus rendering them "expensive pure-bred invalids" (figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*. Image courtesy of John Glassie.

наши детства заканчиваются
когда у трехколесных щенков
купируют хвосты
превращая
в дорогих породистых инвалидов[36]

our childhoods come to an end
when the three-wheeled puppies'
tails are docked
transforming them
into expensive pure-bred invalids

The fifth poem further employs this unsettling mix of stylized diminutives with notions of hero-worship and wartime death in the image of a toy plane (*samoletik*) striving to "bomb the bad guys" but "just

a bit" (chut'-chut' bombit' plokhikh chelovekov). The sixth poem exposes a cinematic illusion and a dark image that calls to mind skinned knees transformed into the graves of childhood dreams (figure 5.9)

Figure 5.9. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*. Image courtesy of John Glassie.

в фильме про титаник
дым идет из всех четырех труб
у настоящего корабля
четвертая труба была декоративной
как кожаные могилки ссадин
для
бога всех падающих с велосипеда[37]

in the movie about the titanic
smoke curls from each of four stacks
on the real ship
the fourth pipe was just for show
like little leathery graves of scabs
for
the god of all who fall from a bike

The final poem has a musical subtitle: minimal techno, which is a

subgenre of techno, characterized by a stripped-down aesthetic that exploits the use of repetition (figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10. John Glassie, photograph from *Bicycles Locked to Poles*. Image courtesy of John Glassie.

> minimal techno:
> как выглядело бы
> в мире велосипедов
> убийство кеннеди?—
> —дрессировано музыкальным маслом
> нескольких промахнувшихся пистолетиков[38]
>
> *minimal techno*:
> how would Kennedy's
> assassination look
> in the world of bicycles?
> trained to whirl with the lilting lube
> of a few misdirected toy guns

The text asks, "how would Kennedy's / assassination look / in the world of bicycles?" The question reverses the gaze that has dominated throughout the work. Throughout the cycle, the poet looks at the bicycles and imagines the human world; this question, however, challenges us to

reverse the gaze and imagine extremes of human violence from the point of view of the world of objects. The answer—"trained to whirl with the lilting lube / of a few misdirected toy guns"—concludes the cycle with another unsettling image: a wild mechanical dance that ends punctuated by seemingly random acts of violence.

The poems inspired by the bicycle photographs represent just one example of the way that photographs taken by others take on disturbing, unexpected forms when transposed into poetic form by Sen-Sen'kov. In addition to Glassie's bicycle photos, the poet has a cycle of poems inspired by Alexander Rodchenko's photographs, as well as a cycle of poems titled *Photo-Paper: Country of Origin—EU* (*Fotobumaga. Strana izgotovleniia—EU*), inspired by the photography of Gottfried Helnwein, Nick Knight, Evgen Bavčar, and August Sander. Each poem in this *Fotobumaga* cycle refers to a portrait of an individual with a visual impairment, including blindness, cataracts, and a woman with a missing eye. Yet the thematic layers of the poems go far beyond optics and the problems of visual experience. As with the bicycle poems, the poet focuses on the pain or abuse suffered by the subjects whose image is captured in the photograph.

двухдневный котёнок с блохами на глазах
его глаза никогда не откроются
он, устав от боли, перестанет догадываться,
что ими можно видеть
в детстве мама всё время поправляла меня,
когда я называл карие глаза коричневыми
можно, хотя бы у этого котёнка
будут коричневые глаза?[39]

a two-day-old kitten with fleas on its eyes
its eyes will never open
he, weary from the pain, will stop wondering
what they could possibly see

as a child, my mother corrected me
when I called brown eyes "chocolate"

perhaps, at least this kitten
could have chocolate colored eyes?

The relationship between violence and photography is part of a larger pattern of visualizing brutality in Sen-Sen'kov's body of writing.[40] A

further illustration of the connection between photography and violence is the miniature prose piece in his coauthored volume *Slesh*, titled "Nine Inch Nails."[41] The short prose piece describes how two male characters move through a city, pounding nails into the body parts of women on oversized advertising posters; one carries out these "backwards urban crucifixions" (urbanisticheskii "raspiatiem naoborot") as Aleksandr Chantsev describes it, while the other snaps photos as evidence, a "confession" (samopriznanie) of their act of revenge against corporations.[42] In reading the passage one cannot escape a certain sense of horror as the act of photographing confers a status of the fully embodied victim on the figures in the larger-than-life advertising posters. It is as if both the nails and the snapshots bring them to life, only to "kill" them into fixed images once again. A similar principle is at work in Sen-Sen′kov's bicycle poems, where the abused and neglected bicycles of Glassie's photographs become a symbol of human suffering in an increasingly aggressive world.

In these discussions of aspects of photo-poetic writing in two major figures of the late- and post-Soviet generations of poet-photographers we see both echoes of and resistance to the poets of the past. We feel the presence of other worlds and beings, as we do in Marina Tsvetaeva's photo-poetic writing. Present, too, are the temporal distortions that photography makes possible, phenomena that we find in Pasternak and Brodsky. As with previous poets, writing on photography creates the possibility for deep despair, for contemplating forms of violence, and for reflections on mortality, permanence, and impermanence. These themes endure in more recent writing on photography. At the same time, other important innovations exist. The photo-poetic texts of Dragomoshchenko and Sen-Sen′kov lean more heavily on a rejection of photographic verisimilitude, relying instead on the opportunities of postmodern poetry and photography to access the visions and experiences of the unconscious mind. Yet, as with all the poets who turn to photographic language and technologies as a contrasting mode of representation, it is the poetic word that ultimately is shown to transcend the representational force of even the most experimental of photographic ways of seeing. This book has traced a century-long set of photo-poetic encounters in modern Russian culture, revealing the wide range of approaches individual poets have taken to harnessing photographic language and aesthetics to do more with, and through, poetic writing.

Coda

Digital Denied: Poetry and Photography after 1999

Poets since photography's invention have grappled with the allure of the medium's representational power and its uneasy relationship with time, mortality, and memory. We might expect poets' fascination with and concerns about the power and distortion of photographic representation to have intensified in this age of digital cameras. Perhaps the most surprising thing about the evolution of photographic motifs in Russian poetry in the digital age is how little of the sweeping cultural shift to digital technology has found representation in poetic writing on photography since the mid-1990s.[1] Despite the ubiquity of cell phone cameras and the active use of social media for disseminating both poetry and photography, poems in Russian about the nature of digital image-making are rare. This assessment comports with Andrew Miller's findings in his study of broader European poetic writing on photography in the digital age; he notes that surprisingly few poems take the nature of digital imaging as their subject. Miller suspects that because digital images are so easily manipulated, "few poets seem to wish to champion the honesty of it." He cites Mary Warner Marien's declaration that "photography has, indeed, lost its innocence, and also, perhaps, its fascination for poets."[2] It is difficult to say whether the absence of digital photo culture as a tool for poetic creation among Russian poets is because it is still too soon for the cultural consequences and aesthetic opportunities of the digital turn to have taken root, or whether it is simply that photography's fundamental appeal remains rooted in predigital means of image-making.

Surveying an impressive corpus of recent photo-poems in Russian collected and edited by Gali-Dana and Nekoda Singer for three recent

issues of the journal *Dvoetochie*, one finds that many of these recent texts on photography are indeed grounded in the aesthetics of predigital photography.[3] Quite a few look back on old photographs with the same sort of fascination with the past also found, for instance, in Bella Akhmadulina's writing on photography. Undoubtedly, there remains a nostalgia for photographs made with film cameras, for the poetic richness of the photographic developing process, and for the still-startling experience of seeing the self or the beloved captured and preserved in photographic form. Amid the large-scale cultural shift to digital technologies, these qualities of film photography persist as the medium's central appeal to the poetic imagination.

Though they are comparatively few, poems that do treat newer photographic practices allow us to speculate about how digital image-making is making its way into the space of the Russian poetic imagination. A 1999 poem by the poet, musician, and activist Kirill Medvedev (b. 1975) anticipates one hallmark of photography in the digital age: contemporary society's unsettling obsession with self-documentation. The poem, titled "it always surprises me" (menia vsegda udivliaet . . .) centers language as a powerful antidote to such impulses, echoing the larger argument of this book about the power of verbal, poetic expression in the face of photography's increasing dominance in contemporary sociocultural space. Writing in the final months of the twentieth century, Medvedev presents us with a society on the cusp of the digital age. The first digital cameras entered the market in the early 1990s but gained ubiquity only a decade later. The world of Medvedev's poem focuses on material incarnations of the predigital boom: printed photographs in albums and videocassette recordings. Nonetheless, the obsession with self-documentation is a phenomenon that has amplified in the digital age.[4]

Medvedev's poem is not the only text from the late 1990s that looks at the practice of documenting lives in photographs. Lev Rubinshtein's 1995 index-card poem "That's Me" (Eto—ia), for example, constructs through a series of captions a set of photographs (not pictured in the text), that playfully celebrates the assembly and archiving of personal histories.[5] Medvedev's poem also addresses life-building through photography, but his focus is on decrying the photograph's status as an embodied physical manifestation of what the poet worries is our culture's unhealthy obsession with self-documentation. A consequence of an economic force that encourages consumption, this "consumer's orientation toward the past" creates a "repulsively bourgeois" drive to "leave behind/some sort

of material proof/of one's own or another's existence."[6] For Medvedev, such narcissistic image-making practices threaten to supplant human memory and other "abstract opportunities" that have been central to human creativity:

меня всегда удивляет
когда люди начинают снимать
на фотоаппарат и на видеокамеру
себя и особенно своих детей
в этом есть
конечно
что-то
милое
и трогательно-буржуазное
но при этом
в этом есть
и что-то жалкое
и отталкивающе-буржуазное:
они как будто хотят оставить
какие-то вещественные доказательства
своего и чужого существования
мне кажется
что никаким абстрактным возможностям
люди уже не доверяют
(возможностям
памяти
например
и некоторым другим
возможностям)[7]

it always surprises me
when people start to take
photos or videos
of themselves or especially their children
there is in this
of course
something
sweet
and touchingly bourgeois
but likewise

there is
something pathetic
and repulsively bourgeois:
it's like they want to leave behind
some sort of material proof
of their own or someone else's existence
it seems to me
that people no longer trust
in abstract
opportunities
(opportunities
for memory
for example
and for other
opportunities)

Medvedev's particular discomfort with photographing and videotaping children—an act at which he expresses dismay at both the opening and closing of the poem—operates as a modern-day extension of nineteenth-century superstitions about photography stealing some metaphysical aspect of its subject.[8] He sees this consumption of images as production of innumerable "phantoms and simulacra" that threaten to supplant the quality of individual memory. For this poet, the substance of meaningful earthly existence lies in memories derived from powerful emotional experiences, not in the drive to supplant memory with photographic images.

мне кажется что
самые важные подробности
откладываются у человека в памяти
и *там*
спрессовываются
в какой-то особый событийный фермент
(который кстати я думаю и есть
та самая пленочка
которая начинает раскручиваться
перед смертью)
мне кажется
что у всех по-настоящему важных впечатлений
(у страха, например,

у восторга
или у любви)
нет и не может быть
никаких документальных свидетельств[9]

it seems to me that
the most important details
are stored in a person's memory
and *there*
they condense
into a kind of special event-based
ferment
(which by the way I think is
the same filmstrip
that begins to roll
just before death)
it seems to me
that all our truly meaningful
impressions
(like fear, for example,
or ecstasy
or love)
don't have and cannot have
any documentary evidence

The poet takes issue with an apparent lack of faith in the abstract in this age of constant documentation, at this time of insistence on material proof of existence, a "consumer's relationship to the past." The concern hinges on whether photography's ubiquity and the social conditioning to self-document is supplanting human memory. Medvedev figures a zero-sum game in which fulfilling the drive to transform experience into physical memory objects means we abandon memories of the most important experiences, which are lost or supplanted by an overflowing, useless archive of images. His text offers a contemporary revision of Plato's *Phaedrus* dialogue, with its debate about whether writing should be viewed as an aid to memory or the greatest threat to humans' capacity to remember.

Perhaps most relevant to this *Phaedrus* argument for the digital age and this book's overarching premise is a concession the poet makes in a parenthetical aside, arguing that personal documentation is historical

documentation. But Medvedev affirms that what matters most of all is not photography, but language.

единственный
по-настоящему живой
исторический источник
—или даже не источник
а единственное живое
тело в исторической перспективе—
язык—
ну это ладно)

the only
true living
historical source
or not even source
but the only living
body in historical perspective is
language
but whatever)

While the deflating transition ("but whatever"/"nu eto ladno") would seem to dismiss its relevance, the poet uses similar rhetorical strategies of deflation throughout the poem. They would appear meant to undermine or diminish the force of his argument, but the effect is the reverse; it is as if rhetorical deflation equates with thematic significance in the space of Medvedev's text. His frequent use of "it seems to me" ("mne kazhetsia") presents a tentative voice, a hedging that permeates the text. Yet the rhetorical diminishing of the statement about the power of language has an inverse relationship to its overall significance. Couched in parentheses and followed by the dismissive "but whatever," the statement is given special weight. This is, perhaps, the most important core of Medvedev's approach to the photographic within the space of this poetic text. Consistent with examples throughout this book, poets rarely resist the urge to bring thoughts concerning the nature of the visual image and its production into contact with ideas about the power of the written word. And here, though disguised as a parenthetical aside, the word "language" occupies its own line, flanked by long dashes, and positioned at the center of the poem, in line 52 of 118. At this central place in the poem, Medvedev makes a powerful claim about the word. If the obsession with self-

documentation can be traced to an interest in the material artifacts of historical knowledge, it is nonetheless language that he distinguishes as the "only living body in historical perspective" (edinstvennoe zhivoe / telo v istoricheskoi perspektive). It is language—and poetry—that can spare us in the end.

The concerns Medvedev articulated more than twenty years ago have become part of a new twenty-first-century photo-poetics, one that more actively rejects the power of the photographic. The photograph is problematic not only in the way it captures and preserves experience but also as a force that undermines our ability to see clearly and remember well. To illustrate this hypothesis about the present and future of Russian-language photo-poetic writing in the digital age, I turn to two examples of photo-poems from a 2019 issue of *Dvoetochie*, each of which casts the camera aside.

A poem by Andrei Sen-Sen'kov in *Dvoetochie* refers to cell phone cameras in its title and problematizes the opposition of analog and cell phone camera practices. The poem, "On the Death of Any Man, Even One Who Went His Whole Life Photographing Only on a Cell Phone Camera," engages the long-standing tradition linking photography and elegy: the poem is set at the burial of a professional photographer.[10] The tools used to pay tribute to the photographer's life and legacy are decidedly not cell phone cameras, but rather professional cameras whose detachable flashbulb system is characteristic of much earlier models. These are flashes that produce a whirring sound made by the battery pack ("the squealing of the nickel") as the boost converters ramp up the voltage in preparation for the next shot. The poem's underlying tension is between the photographic practices of professional photographers, with their hyper-awareness of the status and expense of professional equipment (e.g., they worry the battery pack will be stolen), and the ubiquitous amateur pocket camera: the cell phone. Although this opposition exists in the title and is reinforced by the text's imagery, the most striking thing about this photo-poem is the way it effaces the photographic process. Where we might expect a photo elegy to feature an image of the deceased, or some reference to a memory encoded in a photograph, here we have nothing of the sort. Those who have come to lay the photographer to rest make their final tribute in a spectacle of light, but the camera's function to capture and preserve is abandoned as they point their cameras downward and "photograph nothing."

НА СМЕРТЬ ЛЮБОГО ЧЕЛОВЕКА, ПУСТЬ ОН И СНИМАЛ ВСЮ ЖИЗНЬ ТОЛЬКО НА МОБИЛЬНЫЙ ТЕЛЕФОН

на похоронах фотографа
друзья стоят у могилы
и провожают его фотовспышками
ничего не снимают
опустив объективы камер вниз
и просто нажимают кнопки
чтобы все красиво вспыхивало несколько мгновений
сажают крошечные батарейки
не прислушиваясь
как те пищат никелем
вернувшиеся домой
батарейки
как стебли цветов что положили на могилу
надламываются
чтобы их не украли

IN MEMORY OF ANY MAN, EVEN ONE WHO WENT HIS WHOLE LIFE TAKING PICTURES ONLY ON A CELL PHONE CAMERA

at the photographer's funeral
his friends stand by the grave
and see him off with a round of blinking flashes

they photograph nothing
directing their lenses downward
just pressing the buttons
so everything is beautifully illuminated for a few moments
draining the tiny batteries
not noticing the sound of
the wailing nickel

when they get home
the batteries
like the flower stems placed on the grave
are plucked off
so they don't get stolen.

The deflating feeling, the discomfort we derive from reading this text, comes from the way the mechanical rituals of photography are presented as both a funereal rite and a thoughtless prioritizing of expensive equipment over memory, tribute, and image. This text represents a small part of a larger narrative of concern about how technology has turned life into self-documentation rituals. In the world of Sen-Sen'kov's poem, we have undergone such a strange cultural evolution that the rituals of photographing the dead from two centuries ago have been replaced with a numbing rite of mechanical illumination with no remaining memento of the dead.

The negation of photographic capture is also at the core of Sergei Vasiliev's lyric, "Today, the 17th of May" (Segodnia, 17 maia).[11] Featured in the same issue of *Dvoetochie*, Vasiliev's poem takes a different approach to the problem of incessant digital archiving of lived experience. His poem figures a rare moment of unencumbered vision and contemplation when the speaker's attention is drawn to a profoundly beautiful scene in nature. Though he reaches for his phone, he finds the battery is dead. This moment, however, is a gift. The lyric speaker takes in the beauty of the image before him without the mediation of the camera lens, without that drive to capture and keep the moment inhibiting him from savoring the pleasure of being fully present. The tools to which he turns to preserve the experience are instead verbal; this poem has a diary-like structure, with a date accompanying the meditation on a profoundly peaceful, unusually simple moment of seeing.

сегодня, 17 мая
выпал снег

лишь укрытая им
зелёная
листва
соседнего дерева
не давала замёрзнуть
на остановке
отвлекая внимание

рука потянулась за
телефоном
но он был
разряжен

пришлось вспоминать
каково это
видеть объект
без посредников

today, the 17th of May,
it snowed

the green
leaves
of the neighboring tree
only just touched by the snow
refused to let it
stay frozen there
at the bus stop
distracting my attention

my hand reached for
my phone
but it
was dead

and I had to remember
what it feels like
to see an object
without mediation

Vasiliev's text continues the pattern found throughout this book, in which photography is invoked as a means of foregrounding or reasserting the power of the written word. Yet the simplicity of Vasiliev's moment of setting the camera aside represents what may well be a new pattern of engaging with photography in the age of the cell phone camera: a rejection of photographic self-documentation as collateral for being fully present in each ordinary or extraordinary moment of our lives.

Whether poets embrace the representational tools of the photograph or reject contemporary culture's rewiring of human memory by means of a camera in every cell phone in every pocket, we can be sure that poets will continue to use the power of language to contend with and extend the limits of photographic representation. Photography—as a source for lexicon, metaphor, and writerly practice models—will persist as a source of new opportunities for illuminating consciousness, visualizing the

invisible, and accessing aspects of human experience that, like snapshots of the soul, elude ordinary sensory perception.

Notes

Prologue

1. Gandlevsky's autobiographical novella, *Trepanation of the Skull*, describes his life as a young writer growing up in the Soviet Union. At the center of the work is a detailed account of his struggles with a brain tumor, surgery, and recovery in the 1990s. Sergei Gandlevsky, *Trepanation of the Skull*, trans. Susanne Fusso (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014).

2. Sergei Gandlevsky, "Literaturnye vstrechi Asara Eppelia," discussion moderated by Asar Eppel', February 9, 2010, Jewish Cultural Center at Nikitskaia, Moscow, Russia, audio, 1:49:08, http://79.137.234.183/litradio_audio_archive/progr/vechera/jcc/gandlevskij_eppel.mp3/ (emphasis added).

3. Gandlevsky, discussion (emphasis added).

4. Gandlevsky, discussion.

5. Sergei Gandlevsky, *Opyty v stikhakh* (Moscow: Zakharov, 2009), 147.

6. Genrikh Kirshbaum has noted that the poem's temporal setting is Gandlevsky's favorite: the seasonal boundary between fall and winter. Genrikh Kirshbaum, "Okhotniki na snegu: Elegicheskaia poetologiia Sergeia Gandlevskogo," *NLO*, no. 118 (June 2012), https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/novoe_literaturnoe_obozrenie/118_nlo_6_2012/article/19078/

7. The phrase "white on top, black below" conjures the image of a Russian schoolgirl dress for a formal occasion. The arrangement of light and shadow on the buildings reminds the speaker of this motif.

8. Churilin is a significant writer who was mostly forgotten until a surge of republications of his work in 2011–12, organized by the literary critic Denis Beznosov. Churilin was active in early twentieth-century modernist literary circles and was close with major writers and artists such as Tsvetaeva, Mayakovsky, Pasternak, Khlebnikov, Goncharova, Larionov, and Aseev. *Poeziia serebrianogo veka* (Moscow: Slovo, 2001), 3:494–95.

9. Kirill Zakharov, "Predislovie," in Tikhon Churilin, *Konets Kikapu. Polnaia povest' Tikhona Churilina* (Moscow: Umliaut, 2012), 7.

10. Denis Beznosov, "Tvorcheskii put' Tikhona Churilina," in Tikhon Churilin, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* (Moscow: Gileia, 2012), 1:19–21.

11. N. S. Gumilev, *Pis'ma o russkoi poezii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990), 193–94.

12. "I first heard about the living Natalia Goncharova from Tikhon Churilin, the poet. A brilliant poet" (V pervyi raz ia o Natal'e Goncharovoi—zhivoi—uslyshala ot Tikhona Churilina, poeta. Genial'nogo poeta). Marina Tsvetaeva, "Natal'ia Goncharova. Zhizn' i tvorchestvo," in *Tsvety i goncharnia* (Moscow: Dom-muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 2006), 64.

13. Tikhon Churilin, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* (Moscow: Gileia, 2012), 1:103.

14. Churilin, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, 1:103

15. Churilin, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, 1:104.

Introduction

1. Selected studies of the influence of photography on literary cultures include Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993); Marsha Bryant, *Photo-Textualities: Reading Photographs and Literature* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995); Jane M. Rabb, *Literature & Photography: Interactions, 1840–1990: A Critical Anthology* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Helen Groth, *Victorian Photography and Literary Nostalgia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); David Cunningham, Andrew Fisher, and Sas Mays, eds., *Photography and Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2005); Marcy E. Schwartz and Mary B. Tierney-Tello, eds., *Photography and Writing in Latin America: Double Exposures* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Daniel A. Novak, *Realism, Photography, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Gayle Zachmann, *Frameworks for Mallarme: The Photo and the Graphic of an Interdisciplinary Aesthetic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008); François Brunet, *Photography and Literature* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009); Owen Clayton, *Literature and Photography in Transition: 1850–1915* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Andreas Huyssen, *Miniature Metropolis: Literature in an Age of Photography and Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Lisa Saltzman, *Daguerreotypes: Fugitive Subjects, Contemporary Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Kathrin Yacavone, *Benjamin, Barthes, and the Singularity of Photography* (New York: Continuum, 2019). Titles investigating connections between photography and autobiography include Timothy D. Adams, *Light Writing & Life Writing: Photography in Autobiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Linda H. Rugg, *Picturing Ourselves: Photography and Autobiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Sean R. Meehan, *Mediating American Autobiography: Photography in Emerson, Thoreau, Douglass, and Whitman* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008); Natalie Edwards, Amy L. Hubbell, and Ann Miller, *Textual and Visual Selves: Photography, Film, and Comic Art in French Autobiography* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Katja Haustein, *Regarding Lost Time: Photography, Identity, and Affect in Proust, Benjamin, and Barthes* (Leeds: Legenda, 2012); Akane Kawakami, *Photobiography: Photographic Self-Writing in Proust, Guibert, Ernaux, Macé* (Leeds: Maney, 2013).

2. Ekphrasis can be defined as a verbal description of a work of visual art or, in Mitchell's characterization, "a verbal representation of a visual representation." W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 173.

3. A foundational text in this area is Stephen Hutchings, *Russian Literary Culture in the Camera Age* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), the first third of which considers photographic motifs within nineteenth-century Russian Realist prose. For more on nineteenth-century Russian literature and photography, see Elena Barkhatova, *Russkaia svetopis': Pervyi vek fotoiskusstva 1839–1914* (St. Petersburg: Liki Rossii, 2009), 100–101 and Andrew Wachtel, "Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*: The Novel as Photograph." *History of Photography* 26, no. 3 (2002): 205–15. Katherine M. H. Reischl's *Photographic Literacy: Cameras in the Hands of Russian Writers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), offers fascinating insights into the creative practices of Soviet writer-photographers and explores issues of photographic literacy in the Soviet Union; her study, however, does not engage poets or poetry. Erika Wolf's art-historical contributions on Soviet montage, propaganda, and photographic magazines, for example, her "When Photographs Speak, To Whom Do They Talk? The Origins and Audience of *SSSR na stroike* (*USSR in Construction*)," *Left History* 6, no. 2 (1999): 53–82 and *Aleksandr Zhitomirsky:*

Photomontage as a Weapon of World War 2 and the Cold War (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2016), and David Shneer's *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), are a central part of an emerging body of English-language scholarship on photography and visual culture in the Soviet Union. Other related histories of photography in Russia are Barkhatova's *Russkaia svetopis'*; Susan Tumarkin Goodman, Jens Hoffmann, and Alexander Lavrentiev's *The Power of Pictures: Early Soviet Photography, Early Soviet Film* (New York: Jewish Museum, 2015); David Elliot's *Photography in Russia, 1840–1940* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992); Valerii Stigneev's *Vek fotografii. Ocherki istorii otechestvennoi fotografii, 1894–1994* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Institut Iskusstvovedeniia, 2005); David King's *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in the Soviet Union* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997); and Margarita Tupitsyn's seminal work *The Soviet Photograph, 1924–1937* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). Mikhail Iampol'skii's study of the late Arkadii Dragomoshchenko's interest in photography, *Iz khaosa: Dragomoshchenko: Poeziia, fotografiia, filosofiia* (St. Petersburg: Knizhnye masterskie, 2015), demonstrates the depth to which one might explore these themes in a single writer.

4. Stephen Hutchings, in the first section of his book *Russian Literary Culture in the Camera Age*, traces photographic motifs in these nineteenth-century novels and short stories and even includes a subchapter on Mayakovsky and Rodchenko's collaboration on the photo-collage illustrations to the long poem *Pro eto* (*About that*). His book does not otherwise treat poetic texts.

5. The first mention of photographic technology in Russian poetry appears in Nikolai Nekrasov's 1840 *Nash vek*, and its inclusion has to do with its place in the social and material landscape of the time and its function in the European socioeconomic context. The word "daguerreotype" is included in a sizable list of recent inventions on the European continent. "Minds from all corners of Europe / Are stuck on the newest inventions / Telegraphs and microscopes, / Gas, asphalt, the daguerreotype." N. A. Nekrasov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v piatnadtsati tomakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 277.

Later in 1840 we find another reference to the daguerreotype in Nekrasov, in a satirical image included in his long poem *A Provincial Clerk in Petersburg* (Provintsial'nyi pod'iachii v Peterburge). The eponymous clerk, who visits Petersburg for the first time in twenty years, walks around the city and marvels at recent developments. Taking in the city's arts and culture scene in the second part, he encounters a *mekhanik* who is selling daguerreotypes ("Pictures shaped like a *prianik* / That is, a daguerreo-type" Kartiny v vide prianika / To est' dagerrotip). The speaker likens the daguerreo-type photo to a *prianik*, a traditional gingerbread-like sweet made in a mold that leaves an imprint of text or picture on the top of the pastry. The humorous simile arises most likely from the molded embossed covers used to protect a daguerreotype, which might resemble a *prianik*. At the same time, as the speaker explains, the daguerreotype image is "baked" by the sun, a reference to the medium's long exposure times. Ultimately, the irony of the situation for the clerk is that the photo-*prianik* costs a fortune compared to its confectionary prototype. ("I swear to you, I'm serious / They're baked by the sun / But what a strange joke it is / They're priced like German goods! Bozhus' vam sur'ezno ia: / Ikh solnyshko pechet; / Nu, shutka prekur'eznaia: Nemetskii vse raschet!) Nekrasov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 285.

6. Charles Baudelaire, "The Modern Public and Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 88.

7. Stephen Cheeke, "Photography and Elegy," in *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 145.

8. Stigneev's history of modern Russian photography begins with 1894, a year that was especially significant for the development of photographic technology and its widespread practice across the Russian Empire. Stigneev, *Vek fotografii*, 10–12.

9. On photography's role in the development of avant-garde aesthetics, see Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, 1917–1946* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

10. Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1987), 369.

11. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1977), 3–4.

12. For a broader discussion of the relationship between materiality, the history of science, and lyric poetry, see Daniel Tiffany, *Toy Medium: Materials and Modern Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

13. Andrew Miller, *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis: Lyrical Representations of Photographs from the 19th Century to the Present* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015); Christophe Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015); Gayle Zachmann, *Frameworks for Mallarme* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008); and Philippe Ortel *La Littérature à l'ére de la photographie* (Nimes: Cambon, 2002) are among the few monographs devoted to poetry and photography. Article-length studies are increasingly numerous and varied in their approach; for example, Stephen Cheeke, *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), which includes a chapter "Photography and Elegy"; Josh Ellenbogen, "On Photographic Elegy," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, ed. Karen Weisman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 681–99; Sarah Ehlers, "Jorie Graham's Passion for the Reel: The Lyric Subject Encounters the Image," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 50, no. 2 (June 2017): 29–46; Howard Rambsy II, "Eugene B. Redmond, the Critical Cultural Witness," *Journal of Ethnic American Literature* 1 (2011): 69–89; Stella Bolaki, "'The Absence Doubled?' Photo-Poetic Narratives of Prophylactic Mastectomy," *Literature and Medicine* 35, no. 1 (2017): 1–26, to list only a few.

14. Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 22.

15. Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 22.

16. Aleksandar Bošković, "The Avant-Garde Photopoetry," *Književna Istorija* 48, no. 158 (2016): 287–310; Aleksandar Bošković, "Photopoetry and the Bioscopic Book: Russian and Czech Avant-Garde Experiments of the 1920s" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2013); Jindřich Toman, *Foto/montáž tiskem—Photo/Montage in Print* (Prague: Kant, 2009); Stephen Hutchings, "Photographic Eye as Poetic I: Dialogues of Text and Image in Maiakovskii's and Rodchenko's Pro eto Project," in *Russian Literary Culture in the Camera Age: The Word as Image* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 57–73. For analysis of orthography and page design and its interaction with literary text, see Gerald Janecek, *The Look of Russian Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

17. Two key texts on "photo-poetic encounters" in Russian culture are the Maya-kovsky and Rodchenko's collaboration on *About That* (Pro eto) and Khodasevich's *Sorrento Photographs* (Sorrentinskie fotografii). I chose not to devote individual chapters to these poets because their work has been so well covered in previous scholarship. *Sorrento Photographs* has been traversed in poetry scholarship by numerous scholarly voices, among them David Bethea, "Sorrento Photographs: Khodasevich's Memory Speaks," *Slavic Review* 39, no. 1 (1980): 56–69; Jason Brooks, "'Directing' the Reader: Khodasevich's 'Sorrento Photographs' and Montage," *Comparatist* 28 (2004): 39–51; Jenifer Presto, "Uncanny Excavations: Khodasevich, Pompeii, and Remains of the Past," *Russian Review* 74, no. 2 (2015): 272–92; and Margarita Nafpaktitis, "Multiple Exposures of the Photographic Motif in Vladislav Khodasevich's *Sorrentinskie fotografii*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 52, no. 3 (2008): 389–413. Nafpaktitis's article offers the most in-depth exploration of how Khodasevich's life experience and writing practice intersected with photography. Mayakovsky's collaborations with photographers have been discussed extensively, most thoroughly by Hutchings in *Russian Literary Culture and the Camera Age* and Aleksandar Bošković in "The Avant-Garde Photopoetry," *Појмовник* (2016): 287–310.

18. Will Steacy, *Photographs Not Taken* (Daylight, 2012), 3.

19. Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 2.

20. Liz Heron, "Gateway to a Labyrinth," in *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the 1850s to the Present*, ed. Liz Heron and Val Williams (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 458.

21. Walter Benjamin, "Work of Art in the Age of Reproducibility" (Third Version), *Selected Writings*, vol. 4: *1938–1940* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 266.

22. Cheeke, "Photography and Elegy," 148.

23. Helen Vendler, "Soul Says," in Jon Cook, *Poetry in Theory: An Anthology, 1900–2000* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 577.

24. Barthes coins the terms studium and punctum to describe the aspects of the visual experience of looking at a photograph. The studium refers to the ordinary perception of a body of photographic texts. It is the "human interest" the "average effect," or the photograph's ability to provoke a "polite interest" out of a sense of political or historical importance of the image. The punctum, by contrast, is the element of certain photographs that wrests the viewer out of complacency. The punctum is what "disturbs the studium," it "punctuates" the image and "pricks" the viewer. It is also a "sting, speck, cut, little hole—and also a cast of the dice." "A photograph's punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)." Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 26–27.

25. This notion of a shared quality in size and framing is captured well in the title of Les Murray's 2002 *Poems the Size of Photographs*, as Melissa Feuerstein notes. Melissa Feuerstein, "Object Poems" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2006), 23.

26. Paul Coates, writing on expressions of mourning in the cinema, characterizes the freeze-frame as "one of [the filmic elegy's] most potent forms." Paul Coates, "Elegy and the Elegiac in Film," in *The Oxford Handbook of The Elegy*, ed. Weisman, 591. Freeze-frame can alternatively be applied to a moment in a live dramatic performance in which the actors freeze at a predetermined time to lend special weight to a particular scene.

27. Feuerstein, "Object Poems," 23.

28. For a summary of critical approaches to apostrophe and lyric see Scott Brewster, *Lyric* (London: Routledge, 2009), 34–39.

29. Vendler, "Soul Says," 578.

30. Cited in Vendler, "Soul Says," 575. Poem XXV of "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" begins with a highly visual metaphor of life personified as a being with a steely gaze: "Life fixed him, wandering on the stair of glass, / With its attentive eyes." Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 483.

31. Giorgio Agamben, "Judgement Day," in *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 25.

32. Vendler, citing poet Jorie Graham, calls poetry "the voice of the soul itself." Vendler, *Soul Says*, 3.

33. Bengt Jangfeldt interview with Joseph Brodsky, originally in *Expressens*, April 3, 1987. Reprinted in *Brodskii. Kniga interv'iu* (Moscow: Zakharov, 2005), 309.

34. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 10.

35. Aleksei Parshchikov, "Snimaiu ne ia, snimaet kamera," *Rai medlennogo ognia* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2006), 165.

36. Elena Shvarts, *Stikhi* (Leningrad: Assotsiatsiia "Novaia literatura," 1990), 15.

37. Shvarts, *Stikhi*, 16.

38. In a diary entry on January 4, 1964, Elena Shvarts wrote about a photograph of

Tsvetaeva that appeared to her in a dream. "[Gleb Sergeevich Semenov] gave me Tsvetaeva's articles and they reminded me of everything. It was like a wave that had long receded and then suddenly it was back again. It's not by accident that I had a dream today about a photograph of Tsvetaeva. She looked like the commander of a mountain brigade with a saber. The photograph was of poor quality and sort of smudged; only her eyes were far off and strange." Elena Shvarts, "Dnevniki," *NLO*, no. 3 (2012), http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2012/115/e26.html.

39. Personal correspondence with the author, June 18, 2018.

40. Polina Barskova, *Evridei i Orfika. Stikhotvoreniia* (St. Petersburg: Pushkinskii fond, 2000), 66.

41. Sontag, *On Photography*, 71; Cheeke, *Writing for Art*, 149.

42. The poem was written in 1957, but Tarkovsky only met Nappel'baum's daughter, Olga Grudtsova, in the late 1960s. The dedication appeared for the first time in his 1969 collection *Vestnik*. I am grateful to Marina Arsen′evna Tarkovskaia for bringing this dedication history to my attention, and for her permission to use the poem in my book.

43. Arsenii Tarkovskii, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1982), 124.

44. According to Miller, "the narratives that occur in the ekphrasis of photography generally involve themselves in describing stories that occur between poetic speakers and the photographs they regard." Andrew Miller, *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis: Lyrical Representations of Photographs From the 19th Century to the Present* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 3.

45. For a comparative analysis of the function of the photographic trope in Nabokov's "Snimok" and Bella Akhmadulina's poem of the same title, see M. D. Samarkina, "Poetika fotograficheskogo: 'Snimok' V. Nabokova i B. Akhmadulinoi," in *Liricheskaia evoliutsiia: K 70-letiiu Darvina (Mikhaila Nikolaevicha)*: sbornik statei, ed. V. Ia. Malkina and V. I. Tiupa (Moscow: Editus, 2017), 215–24.

46. Vladimir Nabokov, *Poems and Problems* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 40. Other poems by Nabokov about photography include "Rasstrel" (The Execution) in Nabokov, *Poems and Problems*, and "Bezumets" (The Madman), *Poems and Problems*, 46 and 74.

47. Miller, *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis*, 72–73.

48. Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel ′stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1955–61), 10:19–20.

49. Greta Slobin, "Double Exposure in Exile Writing: Khodasevich, Teffi, Bunin, Nabokov," in *Russians Abroad: Literary and Cultural Politics of Diaspora (1919–1939)*, ed. Katerina Clark, Nancy Condee, Dan Slobin, and Mark Slobin (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 74–92.

50. Original Khodasevich poem and translation quoted in Bethea, "Sorrento Photographs," 328n21.

51. Margarita Nafpaktitis, "Multiple Exposures of the Photographic Motif in Khodasevich's '*Sorrentinskie Fotografii*,'" *Slavic and East European Journal* 52, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 392.

52. Quoted in Bethea "Sorrento Photographs," 335n35.

53. As Nafpaktitis details, the photographic trope sets the stage for much broader questions of artistic representation of human experience and, in particular, the experience of exile. The line "Memory is capricious" that appears in the opening and closing of the poem, she argues, "reveals a number of preoccupations prompted by the poet's viewing of the double-exposed photographs that are then further developed in the body of the poema: an appreciation of unexpected historical correspondences, an awareness of the passage of time, the capriciousness of memory (set against the 'objective truth' of photographs), the morbid prophetic qualities inherent in photography, and a contemplation of the pain of exile." Nafpaktitis, "Multiple Exposures," 402.

54. Akane Kawakami, *Photobiography: Photographic Self-writing in Proust, Guibert, Ernaux, Macé* (Oxford: Legenda, 2013), 6.

Chapter 1. Illuminating Consciousness

1. Boris Pasternak, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii s prilozheniiami: V odinnadtsati tomakh*, ed. Diana V. Tevekelian (Moscow: Slovo, 2003), 2:196. Throughout the chapter I refer to this publication as *PSS* volume:page.

2. Iurii Lotman, "Stikhotvoreniia rannego Pasternaka i nekotorye voprosy strukturnogo izucheniia tektsa," *Trudy po znakovym sistemam* (Tartu: Tartu State University Press, 1969): IV:227–28.

3. *PSS* IV:524. Note that the word play of *plashch* and *pliushch* in this poem is similar to that of Tsvetaeva's "Dom" (Iz-pod nakhmurennykh brovei . . .), a poem explored in chapter 2.

4. Boris Pasternak, *My Sister Life and The Zhivago Poems*, trans. James E. Falen (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 123.

5. For more on the principles of mimicry, misreading, and reinterpretation in this poem and in the novel *Doctor Zhivago* more broadly, see Susanna Witt, *Creating Creation. Readings of Pasternak's* Doktor Zhivago (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 2000), 95–106.

6. *PSS* II:107.

7. "Pasternak v stikhakh VIDIT, a ia SLYSHU," letter dated February 1928. Marina Tsvetaeva and Anna Teskova, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat' liubvi* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2009), 109.

8. Letter to Z. F. Ruoff, December 10, 1955. *PSS* X:115.

9. *PSS* VII:185. My thanks to Karen Evans-Romaine for suggestions to improve this translation.

10. Beyond studies of the direct influence of particular paintings on Pasternak's poetry, Susanna Witt's *Creating Creation* explores the dual meaning of the word *pisat'* in Russian, which means both "to write" and "to paint," and how this linguistic ambiguity creates meaning in Pasternak's writing. Witt uncovers the veiled references to painting that are embedded in *Doctor Zhivago*, particularly in sections that describe the writing process. As in Witt's observations about the etymological and ontological connections between painting and writing, so too does photography suggest the notion of writing using visual illumination, something apparent in photography's etymology in "light-writing," or Fox Talbot's designation of photography as "the pencil of nature." Witt, *Creating Creation*, 30–56. See also William H. F. Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969).

11. Christopher Barnes, *Boris Pasternak: A Literary Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1:45.

12. Dasha di Simplicio wrote of the influence of Leonid Pasternak's profession on his son's poetic writing, while other scholars have considered the work of other painters in Pasternak's aesthetics and poetics. Dasha di Simplicio, "B. Pasternak i zhivopis'," in *Boris Pasternak and His Times: Selected Papers from the Second International Symposium on Pasternak*, ed. Lazar Fleishman (Berkeley: Berkeley Slavic Specialties, 1989), 25:195–211. On Velasquez's Infanta series, see Viacheslav Vsevolodovich Ivanov, "Stikhotvorenie Borisa Pasternaka 'Babochka-buria,'" in *Tekst i znanie* (Wroclaw: Ossolineum, 1983), 303–12. On Raphael, see Igor ′ Smirnov, "Rafael′ i Iurii Zhivago" *Roman tain. Doktor Zhivago* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996). Rembrandt's influence is discussed in V. S. Baevskii, "Lirika Pasternaka v istoriokul′turnom kontekste," *Izvestiia akademii nauk* 47, no. 2 (1988): 130–41. Echoes of Picasso are touched on in D. S. Likhachev, "Introduction," *Izbrannoe v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1985), 1:3–28. Affinities between Pasternak's "The Golden Autumn" and paintings by van Gogh are explored in Nina M. Kauchtschischwili, "L′arte di

Boris Pasternak," *Aevum* 34 (1960): 234–52.

13. Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 22.

14. *PSS* VIII:644.

15. *PSS* VIII:644.

16. Letter to Tsvetaeva, April 12–15, 1926. *PSS* VII:652.

17. Letter to N. A. Tabidze, November 19, 1950. *PSS* IX:629.

18. Letter to his parents, November 24, 1932. *PSS* VIII:633–34.

19. Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 175–76.

20. *PSS* VII:650. This is a reference to the 1924 photograph taken at Nappel'baum's studio in which Pasternak is standing behind his wife, who holds their son on her lap. The photo was taken by the photographer's daughter, the poet F. M. Nappel'baum. Pasternak wrote to his wife about this photograph (September 17, 1926), insisting that the picture turned out well thanks to her (his wife) and their son. But Evgeniia Vladimirovna was disturbed that Pasternak chose to cut his portrait out of the larger group to send to Tsvetaeva as an author photo for a forthcoming publication. His wife, according to the same letter, saw this as an "ominous symbol" (zloi simvol). *PSS* VII:793.

21. Aleksandr Rodchenko, "Protiv summirovannogo portreta za momental'nyi snimok," *Novii LEF* 4 (1928): 14–16.

22. For more on photography in early Soviet culture, see Margarita Tupistyna, *The Soviet Photograph, 1924–1937* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Elizabeth A. Papazian, *Manufacturing Truth: The Documentary Moment in Early Soviet Culture* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 60–62; Reischl, *Photographic Literacy*.

23. Anatolii Lunacharskii, *Vestnik fotografii i kinematografii* 1 (1923): 3. For a comprehensive study of photographic literacy and Soviet writer-photographers, see Reischl, *Photographic Literacy*.

24. For extended treatment of the theme of speed in Russian modernism, see Tim Harte, *Fast Forward: The Aesthetics and Ideology of Speed in Russian Avant-Garde Culture, 1910–1930* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

25. See, for example, V. Mikulin, "Kak fotografirovat' dlia zhurnalov i gazet," *Sovetskoe foto* 1 (April 1926): 14–15.

26. Christopher Stolarski, "From *Press-klishe* to *Soiuzfoto*: Photographic Agencies and Visual Aesthetics in the Soviet Illustrated Press, 1924–1931." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, New Orleans, November 18, 2012.

27. The year 1839 is most often cited as the one in which photography was invented. However, the first permanent photograph was created in 1826 by Nicephore Niepce using a camera obscura. Niepce's photographs took too long to produce, so he partnered with Louis Daguerre, who eventually developed the daguerreotype in 1839, naming it after himself. Niepce was instrumental to this project, but he died in 1833 and never reached the same degree of renown as Daguerre.

28. Osip Brik, "Ot kartiny k foto," *Novyi LEF* 3 (1928): 29–33.

29. Geoff Dyer's book of essays on photography is titled *The Ongoing Moment*, a phrase that encapsulates well the continual dialogue between the captured, stilled image and the temporal qualities contained and given extended duration within the image. Geoff Dyer, *The Ongoing Moment* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005). See also Estelle Jussim's *The Eternal Moment: Essays on the Photographic Image* (New York: Aperture, 1989) and Aleksander Fiut and Theodosia S. Robertson's *The Eternal Moment: The Poetry of Czesław Miłosz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), similarly titled volumes that further convey the static/dynamic qualities of both poetic text and photographic image.

30. For the seminal text in the debate about the best means of representing motion and stasis in art and literature, see Gotthold E. Lessing and Edward A. McCormick, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

31. Murray Krieger, "Appendix: 'Ekphrasis and the Still Movement of Poetry; or Laokoön Revisited,'" 1967, reprinted in *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 263–89.

32. See Lessing and McCormick, *Laocoön*.

33. "Time, in its unique empirical particularity must always be celebrated in its flow even as we arrest it to make its movement a forever-now movement." Krieger, "Appendix," 287.

34. Aleksandr L. Pasternak and Ann Pasternak Slater, *A Vanished Present: The Memoirs of Alexander Pasternak*, trans. Ann Pasternak Slater (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

35. The magic lantern is a projection technology that dates back centuries; it was invented most likely in the seventeenth century, although its true origins are uncertain. The device features painted or photographic slides on glass plates inserted into the device and projected with a light source (a candle or lightbulb) though a lens that transfers the image onto a surface or wall nearby.

36. Pasternak, *A Vanished Present*, 93. All translations from *A Vanished Present* are by Ann Pasternak Slater.

37. The shift in visual orientation in "Khmel'" can also be explained by a larger pattern of "error correction" present through early and later works by Pasternak, and thus we cannot ascribe it solely to experience with optical technology. On the pattern of revision in Pasternak's texts, see Boris Gasparov, "Temporal Counterpoint as a Principle of Formation in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*," in *Doctor Zhivago: A Critical Companion*, ed. Edith W. Clowes (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 89–114.

38. Kornei Chukovskii, "Boris Pasternak," in *Sobranie sochinenii v piatnadtsati tomakh* (Moscow: Terra-Knizhnyi klub, 2001–9), 5:456.

39. Edgar Allan Poe, "The Daguerreotype," in Alan Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 38.

40. Pasternak, *A Vanished Present*, 94.

41. For more on the technical properties and instructions for the use of the magic lantern, as well as the practice of repairing worn-out or damaged slides, see Simon H. Gage and Henry P. Gage, *Optic Projection, Principles, Installation, and Use of the Magic Lantern, Projection Microscope, Reflecting Lantern, Moving Picture Machine* (Ithaca, NY: Comstock, 1914).

42. Gage and Gage, *Optic Projection*, 94, and Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, I:72.

43. Pasternak, *A Vanished Present*, 94.

44. Fleishman explores the key principle of rhythm in Pasternak's work and in his own self-portrait in Lazar Fleishman, "Avtobiograficheskoe i 'Avgust,'" in *Boris Pasternak v dvadtsatye gody* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2003), 409–13.

45. Pasternak, *A Vanished Present*, 95.

46. Pasternak, *A Vanished Present*, 96.

47. Pasternak, *A Vanished Present*, 96.

48. Translated by and quoted in Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, I:72.

49. Evgenii Borisovich Pasternak passed away on July 31, 2012. I am grateful to Karen Evans-Romaine and Dinara Mardanova for connecting me with the Pasternak family and facilitating this visit with Evgenii Borisovich, Elena Vladimirovna, and their son Petr Evgenievich.

50. Interview May 21, 2010. For more on Pasternak's interest in cinema, see Pasternak's August 2, 1913 letter to Bobrov, *PSS* VII:150–52. Dmitrii Bykov offers a lucid summary of the letter in his biography, titled *Boris Pasternak* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2006), 107. Bykov closes the description with the following statement: "Pasternak didn't have any luck with

the cinema. He was, it seems, the only major writer of his generation who didn't do any work for the film industry: he didn't write subtitles (a common way of earning extra money in the 1920s), he didn't write screenplays, was never once commissioned for song lyrics in a film, and he was only captured on film once in a home movie of Irina Emel'ianova's, and there only for a minute when he was reciting 'Tsvet nebesnyi, sinii tsvet' in Tbilisi in 1945." Bykov, *Boris Pasternak*, 107. See also Igor' Smirnov, "Dve neizvestnye stat'i Pasternaka o kinematografe?" *Zvezda* 2 (2007), http://magazines.russ.ru/zvezda/2007/2/sm11.html.

Pasternak's short story "Pis'ma iz Tuly" also includes a description of a group of actors preparing to shoot a film about the history of Russia. For a reading of "Pis'ma iz Tuly" in the context of Pasternak's reworking of Kant's theory of *apperception*, see Elena Glazov-Corrigan, *Art after Philosophy: Early Prose of Boris Pasternak* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013), 113–52.

51. *PSS* VII:29. A curious puzzle in this excerpt is the word "briutanki," which appears to be a neologism used to mean "photographs," deriving from Brut Champagne. The word does not appear in any dictionary, nor were any specialists with whom I spoke familiar with it. The reference to Frelandt concerns Karl Ivanovich Frelandt, the owner of a Moscow-based photography supply company and editor of a photo journal *Vsia Rossiia* (*All of Russia*), which was published monthly from 1904 to 1908. Along with the photographs that accompany this letter (figures 1.8, 1.9), the Pasternak archive houses a box of unused photo plates from Frelandt's supply company. PSS VII:30n6. For more on Frelandt's journal, see O. S. Golovina, "Russkaia fotograficheskaia periodika (1858–1918)," in *Fotografiia. Izobrazheniie. Dokument* (St. Petersburg: ROSFOTO, 2010), 1:62.

52. *PSS* VII:222. For more on these photographs, Pasternak's time in Vsevolodo-Vil'va and Pasternak's relationship with Boris Zbarskii, see "Permskaia pamiat' Borisa Pasternaka" from the series *Otkroem miru Permskii krai* (Perm: Izdatel'stvo Mamontov, 2008), http://www.mamatov.ru/pasternak_memory.html. See also V. V. Abashev, *Vsevolodo-vil'va na perekrestke russkoi kul'tury: Kniga ocherkov Kniaz'ia Vsevolzhskie, Savva Morozov, A. P. Chekhov, Boris Zbarskii, Boris Pasternak* (St. Peterburg: Mamatov, 2008) and PSS VII:223n3.

53. PSS VII:226.

54. Petr Pasternak, email to Molly Blasing, May 5, 2011. The family relocated to the Volkhonka apartment and studio in early September 1911 from an apartment that was scheduled to be demolished. E. B. Pasternak, *Boris Pasternak. Biografiia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Tsitadel'," 1997), 127.

55. Tsvetaeva, "Svetovoi liven'," in *Izbrannaia proza v dvukh tomakh* (New York: Russica, 1979) 1:138. For another reading of Tsvetaeva's use of *svetopis'* here, see Christian Zehnder, *Axiome Der Dammerung: Eine Poetik Des Lichts Bei Boris Pasternak*(Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 34, 207.

56. See chapter 2, which details Tsvetaeva's firsthand experience with photographic images and the technology used to create them.

57. Olga Hasty, "Representing Ephemerality: Pasternak's 'Гроза, моментальная навек,'" in *Eternity's Hostage: Selected Papers from the Stanford International Conference on Boris Pasternak* (Stanford: Stanford Slavic Studies, 2006), 1:122

58. Kornei Chukovskii, "Boris Pasternak," in *Sobranie sochinenii v piatnadtsati tomakh* (Moscow: Terra-Knizhnyi klub, 2001), 5:456–57.

59. *PSS* I:150.

60. *From the Ends to the Beginning: A Bilingual Anthology of Russian Verse*, trans. Tatiana Tulchinsky, Gwenan Wilbur and Andrew Wachtel (Evanston, IL: Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Northwestern University, 2001), http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/storm_momentarily.html.

61. Hasty notes the paradox inherent in the application of the epithet "blinding" to the

photographs, rather than the flashes themselves, which has the effect of "conflat[ing] the process of taking pictures with the photographs that result from that process, creating thereby a simultaneity of what is normally seen in terms of cause and effect. As causality is thus superseded, becoming and being are indistinguishably conflated" (Hasty, "Representing Ephemerality," 124).

62. In an article on *Okhrannaia gramota*, Angela Livingstone introduces a reading of the visual in Pasternak by suggesting that the author displays a tendency to "move away from perception towards another dimension . . . an originating force." Her conclusion, which differs from earlier studies of Pasternak, is that an important theme in Pasternak's writing is "the potential superiority of the dynamic over the visual." Angela Livingstone, "Re-reading *Okhrannaia gramota*: Pasternak's Use of Visuality and His Conception of Inspiration," in *Eternity's Hostage*, ed. Fleishman, 262, 266.

63. *PSS* I:192.

64. Katherine T. O'Connor, *Boris Pasternak's My Sister—Life: The Illusion of Narrative* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988), 150.

65. From *Temy i variatsii*, poem 6, *PSS* I:176.

66. Hasty, "Representing Ephemerality," 128.

67. As Hasty puts it, "Pasternak, who pointedly neglects to supply static images in this poem, has left the metaphor of photography underdeveloped in favor of considering how fleeting moments might be *conveyed* rather than *captured*." Hasty, "Representing Ephemerality," 127; emphasis added.

68. See also Hasty's close reading of Pasternak's translation of Rilke's elegy "Für Graf von Kalckreuth" (1908) in which the German "Blitzlicht" (photographer's flash) is rendered by Pasternak as "molnii" ("lightning"). Hasty, "Representing Ephemerality," 129.

69. Hasty and O'Connor each note that Pasternak left out four additional stanzas contained in a draft manuscript of this poem, two of which make further reference to photography in the "greedy eye of the Kodak," as well as references to chemicals involved in the preparation and development of the photographs. BP may have chosen to exclude these in order not to place undue emphasis on the fixed photographic print. See Hasty, "Representing Ephemerality," 132n.16 and O'Connor, *Boris Pasternak's My Sister—Life*, 154–55, as well as the commentary in *PSS* II:474.

70. Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5.

71. *PSS* IV:532.

72. Letter to Stephen Spender, August 22, 1959, Clowes, *Doctor Zhivago*, 154.

73. Greta Matevossian notes the connection between the "curtain in the air" of this letter and the "kachaiushchiisia tiul'" of "Zerkalo." Greta Matevossian, "Eshche raz o 'Zerkale' Borisa Pasternaka, *Russian Literature* 44 (1998), 435.

74. Recall the photograph of Leonid and Aleksandr Pasternak in the rectangular mirror in figure 1.13. Ljunggren argues that the use of "zerkalo" in the title but the grammatically *indeclinable* "triumo" in the text of the poem is indicative of the work's juxtaposition of static and dynamic. Ljunggren, "'Sad i Ia sam': Smysl i kompozitsiia stikhotvoreniia 'Zerkalo,'" in *Boris Pasternak and His Times: Selected Papers from the Second International Symposium on Pasternak*, ed. Lazar Fleishman (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Slavic Specialties, 1989), 227.

75. *PSS* I:118.

76. See, for example, Andrei Siniavskii, "Predislovie," in *Boris Pasternak. Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 21; Lazar Fleishman, "K kharakteristike rannego Pasternaka," in *Ot Pushkina k Pasternaku: Izbrannye raboty po poetike i istorii russkoi literatury* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006), 351–55; Jean Marie Shultz, "Pasternak's 'Zerkalo,'" *Russian Literature* 13 (1983): 81–100; Ljunggren, "Sad i Ia sam," 224–37; O'Connor,

Boris Pasternak's My Sister-Life, 31–41; Maroti Zsolt, "Zerkalo kak metafora poznaniia: Analiz stikhotvoreniia B. Pasternaka 'Zerkalo,'" *Pushkin i Pasternak: Studia Russica Budapestinensia* 1 (1991): 186–95; Boris Gasparov, "Byt kak kategoriia poetiki Pasternaka," in *Temy i variatsii: Sbornik statei i materialov k 50-letiiu Lazaria Fleishmana* (Berkeley: Berkeley Slavic Specialties, 1994), 56–69; Catherine Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 55–62.

77. O'Connor, *Boris Pasternak's My Sister Life*, 32.

78. Translation from Falen, *My Sister Life and The Zhivago Poems*, 16.

79. Ljunggren also notes this transition from the indicative mood to the *modus irrealis*, which she reads as indicative of a transition from the "landscape-like first part" ("peizazhnaia pervaia chast'") to a "mirror-illusory second part" ("zerkal'no-mnimaia vtoraia") Ljunggren, "Sad i Ia sam," 229.

80. Ljunggren, "Sad i Ia sam," 229.

81. Schultz, "Pasternak's 'Zerkalo,'" 86.

82. Zsolt, "Zerkalo kak metafora poznaniia," 192.

83. Gasparov, "Byt kak kategoriia poetiki Pasternaka," 59–69, 61.

84. Translation from Falen, *My Sister Life and The Zhivago Poems*, 17.

85. *Vtoroi sbornik Tsentrifuga*, Moscow, April 1916: 10.

86. Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 55.

87. Translation from Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 54.

88. Translation from Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 54.

89. Translation adapted from Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 54. Ciepiela seems to mistranslate the first line here as a grammatically fragmented "I hope hers is pulled out," on which she comments in her analysis. "Vynut" here is likely simply the third person plural of vynut' "they will pull [it] out." Ciepiela translates "v"evshiisia" here as "corroded," which has nice sonority with "caustically," but is not as accurate a translation of the word as phrases like "deeply penetrating," "sunk into," "ingrained"; the word suggests something that is difficult to get rid of, like a stain. I adjusted these lines here.

90. Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 54.

91. *PSS* I:135.

92. Translation adapted from Falen, *My Sister Life and The Zhivago Poems*, 51.

93. Because an earlier draft of this poem refers to "Charcot's black soul," Ciepiela draws a connection between the frenzied photograph in "Zamestitel'nitsa" to French psychiatrist Charcot's method of studying his patients at the Salpêtrière asylum by photographing them. Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 70. For more on Charcot's photographic practice, see Georges Didi-Huberman and J. M. Charcot, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003); and Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 25–60.

94. *PSS* III:186. Translation from Angela Livingstone, *The Marsh of Gold: Pasternak's Writings on Inspiration and Creation* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 111.

95. *PSS* III:187n1. Translation from Livingstone, *Marsh of Gold*, 112.

96. Olga Sedakova, "Simvol i sila. Getevskaia mysl' v *Doktore Zhivago*," in *Apologiia razuma* (Moscow: Moscow State Industrial University, 2009).

97. Sedakova, "Simvol i sila," 53. Original quotation from *Doktor Zhivago* in *PSS* IV:558.

98. Sedakova, "Simvol i sila," 48 and 48n71.

99. Sedakova, "Simvol i sila," 46. Sedakova quotes Goethe:

> Was ist das Schwerste von allem? Was dir das Leichteste dünket:
> Mit den Augen zu sehn, was vor dem Auden dir liegt. (Goethe, *Xenien*)
> Chto trudnee vsego? To, chto ty poschitaesh' legchaishim:

Videt′ svoimi glazami to, chto u vsekh na glazakh.
(Sedakova translation, p 46 n. 62)
What is the most difficult thing? The thing that seems most simple:
To use your eyes to see what lies before them. (My translation.)

100. *PSS* IV:391, quoted in Sedakova, "Simvol i sila," 49. Translation from Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 467.

101. Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2, 4.

102. Scholars and biographers of Pasternak have discussed the role of philosophy in shaping Pasternak's creative life, and Glazov-Corrigan's *Art after Philosophy* comprehensively demonstrates how Pasternak's notes from his time as a student of philosophy, available in two volumes as Boris Pasternak, Lazar′ Fleishman, et al., *Boris Pasternak's Lehrjahre: Neopublikovannye filosofskie konspekty i zametki Borisa Pasternaka*, 2 vols. (Stanford: Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literatures, 1996), afford us unprecedented insight into the many philosophical influences that shape his early prose works. As Glazov-Corrigan and others established, the relationship between nature and intellect, history and individual consciousness, are central themes in Pasternak's artistic and philosophical worlds.

103. Fleishman, "K kharakteristike rannego Pasternaka."

104. Sinaiavskii, "Predislovie," 19–20.

105. *PSS* VII:185. Thanks to Karen Evans-Romaine for suggestions on how to improve this translation.

106. Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, I:123.

107. Chan-Fai Cheung, "Photography," in *Handbook of Phenomenological Aesthetics*, ed. Hans R. Sepp (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 263.

108. It is perhaps not surprising then that photographic motifs in Pasternak often appear surrounded by the verb "kazat′sia" (to appear), which is derived from the Slavic roots kazáti and kazać denoting "to say," "to show" as well as the Indo-European ḱáçatē (appear, shine). For example, "kazalos′ ozariatsia" (Groza momental′naia navek), "kazalos′ by vse kallodii zalil" (Zerkalo), "Nam kazhetsia, chto vremia stalo" (Edinstvennye dni). M. Fasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar′ russkogo iazyka* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1957), 2:159.

109. Larissa Rudova, *Understanding Boris Pasternak* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 82.

110. About this work he wrote to Tsvetaeva in 1925: "the forces that gave rise to '1905' lie somewhere in the middle between service and hack-writing. I won't undertake to determine how far removed this is from creative literature." In 1926 he wrote to Lomonosova: "A very large tribute has been paid in this work to the commonplace and very average understanding. However, I wrote it honestly and with the best of intentions. But generally, you know, not only we but the whole world and the whole generation have caught the contagion of mediocrity." Barnes, *Understanding Boris Pasternak*, 1:360.

111. D. P. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, "Boris Pasternak. 1905 god. Retsenziia," *Volia Rossii* 1 (1928): 170.

112. Barnes, *Boris Pasternak* I:356; Rudova, *Understanding Boris Pasternak*, 86.

113. Barnes likens the meticulous nature of this laborious composition process to the practice of translation. Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, I:358.

114. "Nad chem rabotaiut pisateli," *Na literaturnom postu* 1, 1926. *PSS* V:215.

115. *PSS* V:215.

116. In his article "K 'intimizatsii istorii': Zametki o 'Deviat′sot piatom gode' Borisa Pasternaka," Konstantin Polivanov identifies and analyzes sources that Pasternak used in

constructing this work. Polivanov dissects the source material to demonstrate the extent to which the thematic, lexical, and even phonological elements of the poema derive from interactions with other texts and external influences. Konstantin Polivanov, "K 'intimizatsii istorii': Zametki o 'Deviat′sot piatom gode' Borisa Pasternaka," in *Themes and Variations in Honor of Lazar Fleishman* (Stanford: Stanford Slavic Studies, 1994), 8:71–80. Barnes also lists the following sources acquired by Pasternak for this project: writings by Lenin, Sverchkov's *Na zare revoliutsii*, Aiznaft's *Zabastovsh-china i gaponsovshchina*, works by A. Elnitsky and S. Piontkovsky, several issues of *Krasnaia letopis′* and *Byloe*. Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, I:356–57.

117. Quote from Rudova, 88. On connections between Eisenstein's film and Pasternak's poema, see Rudova, *Understanding Boris Pasternak*, 89; Henry Gifford, *Pasternak, a Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 104, and especially Ludmila Shleyfer Lavine, "The Visual and the Epic in Boris Pasternak's 'Devjat′sot pjatyj god,'" *Russian Literature* 71, no. 1 (2012): 83–85.

118. Lavine, "The Visual and the Epic," 78–79.

119. Lavine, "The Visual and the Epic," 77.

120. Lavine, "The Visual and the Epic," 85.

121. "He had waited this way, laughing and blinking, / at name-day parties more than once, / until the magnesium flashed, illuminating / Pale faces without eyes, / That's all. Lightning of iron pain. / Implacable darkness. / And wailing, there circles above the abyss / An angel who's lost his mind" (Nabokov, "Rasstrel," 1928). V. V. Nabokov, *Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda* (St. Petersburg: Simpozium, 1999–2000), 2:586. Elem Klimov's 1985 film *Idi i smotri* (*Come and See*) includes a scene in which a German officer points a gun at Florya's head to pose for a picture, releasing him to slump to the ground after the flashbulb explosion.

122. *PSS* I:282. First published in *Krasnaia niva* in 1926 under the title *Pokhorony Baumana* (Bauman's Funeral) with variant in ln. 100–101: "I khoroneno vechnost′iu / Razom, vrazbros." A 1925 typed manuscript variation of that line is: "I skhvacheno vechnost′iu, / Razom, vrazbros." Notes on variants from commentary in *PSS* I:526.

123. For more on connections between *Eugene Onegin* and *Spektorskii*, see Iu. N. Chumakov, "K istoriko-tipologicheskoi kharakteristike romana v stikhakh *Evgenii Onegin* i *Spektorskii*," in *Boldinskie chteniia*. Gor′kii, 1977: 106–18; Lazar Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak v dvadtsatye gody*, 146–48; Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, I:350–51.

124. We are fortunate to have at our disposal two book-length studies of *Spektorskii*: L. L. Gorelik, *Roman v stikhakh Borisa Pasternaka "Spektorskii" v kontekste russkoi literatury* (Smolensk: Smolenskii Gosudarstvennyi Pedagogicheskii Institut, 1997); and the edited volume detailing the work's textual history compiled by Anna Sergeeva-Kliatis, *"Spektorskii" Borisa Pasternaka: Zamysel i realizatsiia* (Moscow: Sovpadenie, 2007). Summaries of the work and its compositional context are also available in Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak v dvadtsatye gody*; Rudova, *Understanding Boris Pasternak*; Gifford, *Pasternak*; Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*; Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, and Bykov, *Pasternak*.

125. Fleishman, *Pasternak v dvatsatye gody*, 159–60.

126. Sergeeva-Kliatis, "*Spektorskii*" *Borisa Pasternaka*, 102.

127. Fasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar′*, 3:733. Partridge's entry for "spectacle" includes the origins of "spectrum" from the Latin *specere*. Eric Partridge, *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 646–47. Recall Yuri Zhivago's medical training in vision and optics.

128. Pasternak began the story of Sergei Spektorskii in the beginning of the 1920s in a prose piece published as *Tri glavy iz povesti* ("Three chapters from a tale") in 1922. He started work on the novel in verse in 1925 and continued to struggle on and off with the work until finally bringing it to completion in 1931. Chapters 1–3 were published in the almanac *Krug* in 1925, chapter 4 in *Kovsh* in 1926, chapter 5 first appeared in *Kransnaia nov′* in 1928, vol. 1,

while chapters 6 and 7 appeared in the same publication in vol. 7 of the same year. Chapters 8 and 9 came out in vol. 12 of *Krasnaia nov'* in 1929, and the introduction was published first in *Novyi Mir* in 1930. The entire revised work came out in book form as a single volume in 1931 with an epigraph from Pushkin's *Mednyi vsadnik*. For more on the textual history of the work, see Sergeeva-Kliatis, "*Spektorskii*" *Borisa Pasternaka*.

129. David Bethea, *Shape of the Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 242.

130. *PSS* II:8.

131. *PSS* III:186. Translation by Livingstone, *The Marsh of Gold*, 111.

132. For a different reading of the darkness emerging from this apparatus, see Zehnder, *Axiome Der Dammerung*, 252.

133. Fleishman, *Pasternak v dvatsatye gody*, 159–60.

134. Rudova, *Understanding Boris Pasternak*, 101.

135. The repetition of *melo*, *melo* is a precursor to the famous "Zimniaia noch'" poem from the Zhivago cycle.

136. *PSS* II:45.

137. "Kak vosstaet vremia na cheloveka i obgoniaet ego." Letter to N. P. Medvedev in November 1929, *PSS* VIII:363.

138. Interview with Sven Birkerts, 1979. "However, if I were to summarize, my main interest is the nature of time. That's what interests me most of all. What time can do to a man. That's one of the closest insights into the nature of time that we're allowed to have." Iosif Brodskii, *Kniga interv'iu*, 3rd ed. (Moscow: Zakharov, 2005), 80.

139. All remaining quotations from *Doctor Zhivago* are from Boris Pasternak, *Doktor Zhivago* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959). This volume is the second reprint of original Russian-language text printed in Milan, Italy, 1957. Photographs are described in the following scenes: Yuri speaks of Evgraf's family and describes a photograph of the house where Evgraf and his mother live. The house seems to look menacingly at him, its five windows figured like a human face (ch. 3, pt. 4, 70); there is a photograph of Rufina Onisimovna's husband (ch. 3, pt. 17, 91); when Antipov is presumed to have been killed in battle, his friend Galiullin collects the photographs from among his belongings to give to his widow. Later on, Lara does not show any interest in the photos but feels remorse for not being kinder to Galiullin, who had gone to so much trouble to preserve them (ch. 4, pt. 9, 115); Yuri had seen pictures of his son, from whom he had been separated for a year; when they are reunited the child is not as handsome as in the photos (ch. 6, pt. 3, 175–76); mention of a stereoscope (ch. 8, pt. 10, 284); mention of a photographer's studio (ch. 10, pt. 3, 318; ch. 10, pt. 4, 321); Yuri sees haunting, unfamiliar photographs on the wall of Lara's former home (ch. 13, pt. 7, 401).

140. The poems "Bad Roads in Spring," "Autumn," "Parting," "Encounter," and "Winter Night" are directly connected to scenes figured in the prose novel.

141. *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 3, pt. 10, 80. In Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, 70.

142. "Why do I have this terrible fate where I see everything and feel pain about it all." *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 2, pt. 4, 24.

143. *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 2, pt. 12, 45.

144. *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 3, pt. 3, 68. In Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, 60.

145. Yuri makes it his task to depict Lara's memory in words: "Tak ia izobrazhu tebia." *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 14, pt. 13, 464.

146. See V. S. Frank, "Vodianoi znak. Poeticheskoe mirovozzrenie Pasternaka," *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1990): 72–76.

147. *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 5, pt. 9, 151–52. In Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, 132–33.

148. *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 1, pt. 8, 17. In Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, 15–16. Bykov

views this scene in autobiographical terms and also sees a connection to the parable of Christ cursing the fig tree. Bykov, *Boris Pasternak*, 27.

149. Bykov, *Boris Pasternak*, 26–27.

150. Note also the role of an enduring embrace in Lara's monologue in which she situates their love within the history of mankind, going back to Adam and Eve: "i v pamiat′ etikh ischeznuvshikh chudes my dyshim i liubim, i plachem, i derzhimsia drug za druga i drug k drugu l′nem." *Doktor Zhivago*, ch. 13, pt. 13, 413.

"And you and I are the last reminder of all those countless great things that have been done in the world in the many thousands of years between them [Adam and Eve] and us, and in memory of those vanished wonders, we breathe and love, and weep and hold each other, and cling to each other." In Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, 361.

151. Bergson defines *durée* as "indivisible continuity of change." Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*: *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1975), 149.

152. On Pasternak and Bergson, see Guy de Mallac, *Boris Pasternak, His Life and Art* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 289–92. For discussion of Pasternak and time, and of *durée* more specifically, see Irene Masing-Delic's "Bergsons 'Schöpferische Entwicklung' und Pasternaks 'Doktor Schiwago,'" in *Literatur- und Sprachentwicklung in Osteuropa im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Reissner (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1982), 112–30; Victor Terras, "Boris Pasternak and Time," *Canadian Slavic Studies* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 264–70; Victor Terras, "'Im Walde': Goethe und Boris Pasternak," *Die Welt der Slaven* 16, no. 3 (1971): 283–88. On the relationship between Bergson's *durée* and photography, see Michael S. Roth, "Photographic Ambivalence and Historical Consciousness," *History and Theory* 48, no. 4 (December 2009): 82–94; Paul Douglass, "Deleuze, Cinema, Bergson," *Social Semiotics* 8, no. 1 (1998): 25–35; Stella Baraklianou, "Pasearse. Duration and the Act of Photographing," in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence. Painting, Photography, Film*, ed. John Mullarkey and Charlotte DeMille (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 131–47.

153. Rudova, *Understanding Boris Pasternak*, 122.

154. Rudova, *Understanding Boris Pasternak*, 120–21.

155. Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, 354.

156. Bykov, *Boris Pasternak*, 829–30.

157. Zh. A. Dozorets, "B. L. Pasternak: *Kogda Razguliaetsia*: kniga stikhov kak tseloe," *Russkii iazyk v shkole: Metodicheskii zhurnal* 1 (1990): 61.

158. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 208.

159. This cataloging of images is also seen in a poem from the same collection titled "Zolotaia osen′" ("Golden Autumn"), in which the poet describes autumn as an enormous "magical chamber, open for all to admire" (Osen′. Skazochnyi chertog, / Vsem otkrytyi dlia obzora.) Its beauty is likened to a room full of framed landscapes: "Like an exhibit of paintings: Halls, and halls, and halls, and halls" (Kak na vystavke kartin: / Zaly, zaly, zaly, zaly) *PSS* II:164.

160. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 306.

161. The acclaimed Soviet author Chingiz Aitmatov used this line as the title of his first novel, published in 1980 in *Novyi Mir* and in translation in 1983 by Indiana University Press as *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*.

162. Stella Baraklianou, "Pasearse. Duration and the Act of Photographic," in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence*.

163. This poem, read in photographic terms, calls to mind a strikingly similar poetic text by Joseph Brodsky. In the fifth part of his *Rimskie elegii* (1981), Brodsky outlines a similarly sleepy, dream-like state to describe the way that individuals embrace the camera as a means

of developing and preserving a memory of themselves for a future life that extends their image beyond the expanse of their lives in the world. For Brodsky, it is the poetic word itself that will propel the poet into a future life. See chapter 3 for more on Brodsky and photography.

164. The image of the clockface here also harkens back to a similar image in the poem "V lesu" (In the Forest), *PSS* 1:192–93.

Chapter 2. Through the Lens of Loss

1. On the relationship between text and image in these works, see Maya Barzilai, "On Exposure: Photography and Uncanny Memory in W.G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten* and *Austerlitz*," in *W. G. Sebald: History, Memory, Trauma*, ed. Scott Denham and Mark McCulloh (New York: W. de Gruyter, 2006), 205–18; Laurence Petit, "Speak Photographs?: Visual Transparency and Verbal Opacity in Nabokov's *Speak, Memory*," *Nabokov Online Journal* 3 (2009), http://www.nabokovonline.com/uploads/2/3/7/7/23779748/v3_04_petit.pdf; Robyn Jensen, "Authorizing the Image: Photography in Nabokov's *Speak, Memory*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 63, no. 2 (Summer 2019): 179–205; Marja Warehime, "Photography, Time and the Surrealist Sensibility," in *Photo-Textualities*, ed. Marsha Bryant (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 43–56.

2. Versions of the chapter have appeared previously in Molly Thomasy Blasing, "Through the Lens of Loss: Marina Tsvetaeva's Elegiac Photo-Poetics," *Slavic Review* 73, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 1–35, and Molly Thomasy Blasing, "Cvetaeva and the Visual Arts," in *A Companion to Marina Cvetaeva*, ed. Sibelan Forrester (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2016), 191–238. Used with permission of the publishers.

3. I. Iu. Beliakova et al., eds., *Slovar' poeticheskogo iazyka Mariny Tsvetaevoi*, 4 vols. (Moscow: Dom-Muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 1996–2004).

4. Helen Vendler, *Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2. The horizontal addressee is one that the lyric speaker can access in the physical world—a lover, an object, or a landscape that is present in the poet's surroundings. The vertical addressee, by contrast, is one that "inhabit[s] a physically inaccessible realm conceived as existing 'above' the speaker . . . The tone adopted by the speaker in vertical apostrophe rises above the level of respect shown to a worldly patron or the veneration shown toward a beloved, and manifests a humility suitable to a speaker addressing the divine." A vertical addressee could be a god, a dead relative, a reader in the future, or a historical figure who died long ago. In the context of Tsvetaeva, for example, we might take the famous cycle *Stikhi k Bloku* (*Poems to Blok*). Tsvetaeva did not know the renowned Russian Symbolist poet Aleksandr Blok personally, and he died in 1921, the year before the lyrics to him were published. Her poem "In My Moscow Cupolas Are Blazing!" (U menia v Moskve kupola goriat) from this cycle constructs an elaborate geography of separation: in it, we find that Tsvetaeva's Moscow River and Blok's Neva in St. Petersburg will not flow together, just as Tsvetaeva's hand will not entwine with Blok's. The sonority of *reka* (river) and *ruka* (hand) provides an ironic counterpoint to the poem's conclusion: the two poets will meet only when dusk catches up to dawn. In other words, they will not meet on this earth—they can connect only through the language of poetry.

5. Marina Tsvetaeva, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, ed. A. A. Saakiants and L. A. Mnukhin (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 1994), 5:193. I subsequently refer to this as *SS*, volume:page.

6. Tsvetaeva left the Soviet Union in 1922; she spent a short time in Berlin, then three years in Prague. She lived in Paris and its suburbs from 1925 until 1939, the year she returned to the Soviet Union.

7. Marina Tsvetaeva to Anna Teskova, February 18, 1935, in Marina Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat' liubvi . . .: Pis'ma k Anne Teskovoi 1922–1939* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2009), 254.

8. The correspondence between Tsvetaeva and Gronskii, as well as related poems and essays, has been published as Marina Tsvetaeva and Nikolai Gronskii, *Neskol'ko udarov serdtsa: Pis'ma 1928–1933 godov*, ed. Iu. I. Brodovskaia and E. B. Korkina (Moscow: Vagrius, 2004).

9. Tsvetaeva to Teskova, November 21, 1934, in Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat' liubvi*, 248. Tsvetaeva writes in her essay "Poet-al'pinist" that everyone involved dismissed speculation about the possibility that Gronskii's death was a suicide. She reconstructs in forensic detail all that was known about the circumstances of his death, but concludes that the precise nature of the tragedy "was not clear and will never be fully cleared up" (Eto ne vyiasnilos' i ne vyiasnitsia nikogda). Tsvetaeva, "Poet-al'pinist," translated from Serbo-Croatian by Olga Kutasova, *SS*, 5:434.

10. On postmortem photography and its legacy, see Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow: Death and Photography in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995); Audrey Linkman, *Photography and Death* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

11. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 97.

12. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

13. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 15.

14. Sontag, *On Photography*, 154.

15. See André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Trachtenberg, 237–44. In addition, Jean-Luc Nancy's musings on the connections between photography and the ancient practice of making death masks are explored in Louis Kaplan, "Photograph/Death Mask: Jean-Luc Nancy's Recasting of the Photographic Image," *Journal of Visual Culture* 9, no. 1 (2010): 45–62.

16. The readers will recall Benjamin's writing on the problems arising from modern mechanical reproduction and its stripping of an aura from a work of visual art. His writing on photography is quite nuanced, and he allows for the presence of an aura in photography, especially in its earliest forms such as the daguerreotype. For a full discussion of some of the paradoxes present in Benjamin's definition of the aura of photography, see Carolin Duttlinger, "Imaginary Encounters: Walter Benjamin and the Aura of Photography," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 79–101.

17. Benjamin first defined the aura this way in his "Little History of Photography," in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 2:518.

18. Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Trachtenberg, 202. See also Eduardo Cadava's *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), a scholarly exploration of the way Benjamin employs the language of photography to formulate his conception of history.

19. For more on the exigency of the photographic image, see Giorgio Agamben, "Judgment Day" in *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 23–28. Agamben concentrates primarily on the relationship between gesture and photography, invoking Louis Daguerre's famous early photograph *Boulevard du Temple* (1838) as an ideal visualization of the Last Judgment: an ordinary gesture captured by the camera becomes a touchstone that "collects and condenses in itself the meaning of an entire existence" (24). For Agamben, photography engenders a cycle of loss and return in that it "grasps the real that is always in the process of being lost, in order to render it possible once again" (27).

20. Victoria Schweitzer, *Tsvetaeva* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), 301. Furthermore, in the introduction to her translation of Tsvetaeva's *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917–1922*, Jamey Gambrell also argues that "Tsvetaeva is a poet of the ear rather than of the eye: visual images are rare in her poetry and her prose is rarely descriptive." Gambrell

goes on to corroborate this with lines from Tsvetaeva's *Poem of the Air*: [To be] the ear—is to be / Pure spirit . . . Is it pure hearing / or pure sound / that propels us? . . . (Ukhom—chistym dukhom / Byt' . . . Chistym slukhom / ili chistym zvukom / dvizhemsia? . . .). Gambrell argues further that the answer to these questions "is rhetorical: the ear (ukho), hearing-pitch (slukh), spirit (dukh) and sound (zvuk) are all blood brothers in the kinship system of the Russian language." Gambrell, "Introduction," in *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), xxx.

21. For an intervention, see my contribution to new readings of the role of the visual arts (painting, sculpture, and photography) in Cvetaeva's creative world. Molly Thomasy Blasing, "Cvetaeva and the Visual Arts," in *A Companion to Marina Cvetaeva*, ed. Forrester, 191–238.

22. Letter to D. A. Shakhovskoi, 1925, quoted in and trans. Olga Peters Hasty, *Tsvetaeva's Orphic Journeys in the Worlds of the Word* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 108.

23. Tsvetaeva actively renounces the visual in places perhaps to distance herself from her father's work establishing the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, which opened in 1912. Beyond filial differentiation, however, the distance she places between herself and the visual arts also establishes a philosophical position in which the visual world does not operate on its own for its own sake.

24. Rainer Maria Ril'ke, Boris Pasternak, and Marina Tsvetaeva, *Pis'ma 1926 goda* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 72.

25. Hasty, *Tsvetaeva's Orphic Journeys*, 108–9.

26. Hasty, *Tsvetaeva's Orphic Journeys*, 109.

27. Alyssa Dinega, *A Russian Psyche* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 117.

28. Dinega, *A Russian Psyche*, 95.

29. Dinega, *A Russian Psyche*, 121–22.

30. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 5:248.

31. Zaochnost' derives from a combination of the prefix za, meaning "beyond," and oko, an archaic, sacred, or poetic word for "eye" (as in the proverb "an eye for an eye" [*oko za oko*]). Zaochnost' then, at the most literal level, means "beyond-seeing," or "beyond sight." In practice, if something is done zaochno it may refer to the idea of correspondence (uchit'sia zaochno is "to take a correspondence course"), in absentia, or something done remotely.

32. Olga Kolbasina-Chernova, "Marina Tsvetaeva," in *Marina Tsvetaeva v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov: gody emigratsii*, ed. L. Mnukhin and L. Turchinskii (Moscow: Agraf, 2002), 2:77. "Po plechu," which I have translated above as "of her stature" also suggests a physical closeness; they are standing side by side as if part of a rank of justly matched poets.

33. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 2:216.

34. The examples of the expansive depth of eyes that follow here are also suggestive of the way saints' eyes are figured in Orthodox icons. They are usually quite large, drawing attention to the internal, sacred world rather than the external.

35. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 1:202.

36. Marina Tsvetaeva, *Neizdannoe: Svodnye tetradi*, ed. E. B. Korkina and I. D. Shevelenko (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 1997), 34.

37. Tsvetaeva's entwining of musicality and topography in her writing on the theme of separation can be seen vividly in her lyrics "U menia v Moskve—kupola goriat!" in her *Poems to Blok* and "Rasstoianie: versty, mili . . ." dedicated to Pasternak. Brodsky, in his essay "Footnote to a Poem," devoted to Tsvetaeva's *Novogodnee*, investigates the intersection of the acoustic and the spatial in that poema, noting that as the New Year's greeting unfolds, its flight path moves ever upward and outward: "from the abstractly geographic *svet* the line acoustically and topographically flies upward toward the short, sob-like *krai* ("edge," "realm"): edge of the world, edge in general, heavenward, to paradise. *S novym . . . kraem*

means, apart from everything else, 'Happy new realm, happy new boundary, happy crossing of it.'" Joseph Brodsky, "Footnote to a Poem," *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986), 206–7.

38. Ariadna Chernova-Sosinskaia, "V odnom dome 'na Smikhove,'" in *Marina Tsvetaeva v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, ed. L. A. Mnukhin and L. M. Turchinskii (Moscow: Agraf, 2002), 2:82.

39. Anastasiia Tsvetaeva, *Vospominaniia v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Boslen, 2008), 1:41–42.

40. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 1:215.

41. Another example of a family photograph finding its way into poetry is layered intertextually in Tsvetaeva's first long poem, *Charodei* (The Enchanter, 1914), about the literary critic and family friend Ellis (L. L. Kobylinskii). Anna Saakiants details how the photograph of Tsvetaeva's mother in her casket, which hung in Ivan Tsvetaev's office in the Trekhprudnyi (Three Ponds Lane) house, is figured in Ellis's 1914 book of poems *Argo* in the poem "V rai" (To Heaven): "Na divan uselis′ deti, / noch′ i stuzha za oknom, / i nad nimi, na portrete / mama spit poslednim snom." The image is, in turn, referenced in Tsvetaeva's long poem to Ellis. See Anna Saakiants, *Zhizn′ Tsvetaevoi: Bessmertnaia ptitsa—feniks* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2000), 62–64.

42. Ariadna Efron, *O Marine Tsvetaevoi: Vospominaniia docheri* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel′, 1989), 107; emphasis added.

43. In the introduction to their volume, Saakiants and Mnukhin describe the surviving Tsvetaeva iconography as "unfortunately, scant." Anna Saakiants and Lev Mnukhin, eds., *Marina Tsvetaeva: Fotoletopis′ zhizni poeta* (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 2000), 4. Many family photos were lost or destroyed following Anastasiia Tsvetaeva's 1937 arrest, and very few originals remain. The Rilke photos are part of the Pasternak Family Archive, and the Gronskii photos are housed at the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI).

44. Benjamin Paloff, "Book Review: *Letters: Summer 1926*." *Slavic and East European Journal* 47, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 121.

45. On the theme of meetings in dreams, see Catherine Ciepiela's thorough analysis of Tsvetaeva's *poema* "S moria" (From the Sea, May 1926), which features an imagined mutual dreamscape meeting with Pasternak. Catherine Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 178–87. The poema concludes with a transformation of facial features into ecstatic imagery that moves beyond the world of visual encounters:

Vdol′ by s ide, bok o bok,
Ogn′, a ne dymno.
Ved′ ne sovmestnyi
Son, a vzaimnyi:

Nos, dumal? Mys!
Brovi? Net, dugi,
Vykhody iz—
Zrimosti.

Side by side, but not crowded.
A fire, but no smoke.
For this isn't dreaming together
But mutual dreaming:

A nose, you thought? A promontory!
Eyebrows? No, rainbows,
Exoduses from—
Seen-ness.

(Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 187.)

46. See, for example, Hasty, *Tsvetaeva's Orphic Journeys*, 134–223; Dinega, *A Russian Psyche*, 129–77; Irina Shevelenko, *Literaturnyi put′ Tsvetaevoi* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002), 339–47; Svetlana Boym, *Death in Quotation Marks: Cultural Myths of the Modern Poet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 224–29; Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 143–48, 158–60, 191–93; and the texts and commentaries to the English and Russian volumes Boris Pasternak, Marina Tsvetayeva, Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters: Summer 1926*, ed. Yevgeny Pasternak, Yelena Pasternak, and Konstantin M. Azadovsky, trans. Margaret Wettlin and Walter Arndt (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985) and Ril′ke, Pasternak, and

Tsvetaeva, *Pis'ma 1926 goda*. For information on Rilke's experiences and travels in Russia, see Anna A. Tavis, *Rilke's Russia: A Cultural Encounter* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994).

47. As Ciepiela notes, this word was coined by Tsvetaeva to describe instances of missed meetings. See Ciepiela, *The Same Solitude*, 82.

48. Rainer Maria Rilke to Marina Tsvetaeva, May 1926, in Rilke, Pasternak, and Tsvetaeva, *Letters*, 80.

49. See Petr Ivanovich Shumov and Pierre Serge Choumoff, *Russkii parizhanin: Fotografii Petra Shumova* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2000).

50. Tsvetaeva to Rilke, dated "Ascension Day 1926," in Rilke, Pasternak, and Tsvetayeva, *Letters*, 95. Rilke was close to Rodin and wrote a monograph on the sculptor that was illustrated with Shumov's photographs. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Auguste Rodin* (Rudolstadt: Greifenverl, 1903).

51. It is important to note that Tsvetaeva bends the truth somewhat in the letter to Rilke quoted here. Although she had several portraits taken at Shumov's studio in Paris in 1925, Shumov was not present at the time; the photos were taken by her friend Vladimir Sosinskii, who was working for Shumov at the time. What is important here—and this is evidenced by Tsvetaeva's exuberant letters of thanks to Shumov for the portraits—is not that Shumov took the photo but that her portrait was taken by Shumov's camera. Tsvetaeva's letters of thanks to Shumov are reproduced in Shumov and Choumoff, *Russkii Parizhanin*, 6–7. Further evidence of Tsvetaeva's lack of direct familiarity with Shumov is the fact that the postcard she sent him from London on March 24, 1926 is addressed in error to "Aleksandre," rather than "Pierre" (Petr Ivanovich), Chumoff, and begins "Dorogoi Aleksandr Ivanovich!"

52. Rilke to Tsvetaeva, May 17, 1926, in Rilke, Pasternak, and Tsvetayeva, *Letters*, 100.

53. "*Versts* is out. A Potemkin made of quatrains. Commentary at the end. Our portraits share the same page" (Versty vyshli. Potemkin chetverostishiiami. V kontse primechaniia. Nashi portrety na odnoi stranitse). Potemkin here refers to the *Potemkin* section ("Morskoi miatezh") of Pasternak's *The Year 1905*, which appeared in this issue. Marina Tsvetaeva and Boris Pasternak, *"Dushi nachinaiut videt'": Pis'ma 1922–1936 goda*, ed. E. B. Korkina and I. D. Shevelenko (Moscow: Vagrius, 2004), 255.

54. Dinega, *A Russian Psyche*, 136.

55. Tsvetaeva to Rilke, June 14, 1926, in Rilke, Pasternak, and Tsvetayeva, *Letters*, 143.

56. Tsvetaeva to Pasternak, February 9, 1927, in Tsvetaeva, *SS* 6:269.

57. Another reference to optical connections unifying space and time comes in a letter dated July 28, 1926, in which Rilke uses the metaphor of the telescope lens to describe the circumstances of Tsvetaeva's fortuitous entrance into his life in the form of her first letter: "But you, Marina, I did not find with the free-ranging naked eye; Boris placed the telescope and focused my gaze on you . . . in my eyes, directed upward, first there was just space and then suddenly you appeared in my field of vision, pure and strong, in the focus of the rays of your first letter." Rilke to Tsvetaeva, July 28, 1926, in Rilke, Pasternak, and Tsvetayeva, *Letters*, 194.

58. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 3:134.

59. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 2:296.

60. See, e.g., Dinega, 270n28; N. G. Datskevich and M. L. Gasparov, "Tema doma v poezii Mariny Tsvetaevoi," *Zdes' i teper'*, no. 2 (1992): 121.

61. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 2:295.

62. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1, 1859, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1859/06/the-stereoscope-and-the-stereograph/303361/.

63. Adam Frank, "Emily Dickinson and Photography," *Emily Dickinson Journal* 10, no. 2 (Fall

2001): 7.

64. See also Tsvetaeva's layering of a photographic image and the natural world in her poem inspired by a photograph of Anatolii Shteiger framed by the Alps, the first text in her 1936 *Stikhi sirote* (Poems to an Orphan): "The icy tiara of mountains— / Is just a frame for this fleeting face. / Today I parted the ivy / On the granite of the castle." (Ledianaia tiara gor— / Tol'ko brennomu liku—ramka. / Ia segodnia pliushchu—probor / Provela na granite zamka). Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 2:337. See also Shevelenko, *Literaturnyi put' Tsvetaevoi*, 432.

65. For a description of family daguerreotypes in the Tsvetaev home, see Anastasiia Tsvetaeva, *Vospominaniia*, 1:42.

66. Vladislav Khodasevich also makes use of the photographic double exposure trope in his *Sorrentinskie fotografii* (Sorrento Photographs, 1926), which juxtaposes the author's émigré present with a previous life in St. Petersburg/Petrograd. For more on this work, see Margarita Nafpaktitis, "Multiple Exposures of the Photographic Motif in Vladislav Khodasevich's '*Sorrentinskie Fotografii*,'" *Slavic and East European Journal* 52, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 389–413 and David M. Bethea, "Sorrento Photographs."

67. See also Khodasevich's long blank-verse poem of the same name (*Dom*, 1919), which also treats the image of an abandoned home, a vacant space that houses specters of the past.

68. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 2:295.

69. Letter to Anna Teskova, October 1, 1925. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 6:341.

70. "I'm the same height as you / Prague knight!" This line is from the penultimate stanza of "Prague Knight" (Prazhskii rytsar'), September 27, 1923. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 2:228.

71. Letter to A. V. Bakhrakh, Prague, September 27, 1923. The list of objects here (vows (kliatvy), rings (kol'tsa), waves (vol'ny)) is an auto-quotation from Tsvetaeva's 1923 poem "Prague Knight," which includes the stanzas: "Kliatvy, kol'tsa . . . / Da, no kamnem v reku / Nas-to—skol'ko / Za chetyre veka! // V vodu propusk / Vol'nyi. Rozam—tsvest'! / Brosil—broshus'! / Vot tebe i mest'!" Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 2:228.

72. According to the Czech legend, the Knight Bruncvik lived during the reign of Ottokar I in the thirteenth century. He was accompanied on his heroic journeys by a lion, whom he befriended after helping the lion defeat a dragon in battle. The statue of Bruncvik on the Charles Bridge in Prague depicts the young knight with sword in hand, shield by his side, and the lion curled up at his feet. Some say that the Czech national symbol of the two-tailed lion is rooted in the Bruncvik legend.

73. Though lost for a time, the photogravure was eventually recovered and is now housed in the archive of the Tsvetaeva House Museum in Moscow. Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat' liubvi*, 347n4.

74. Alia is Tsvetaeva's daughter Ariadna, and Mur is her son, Georgii.

75. Letter to Teskova, October 24, 1938. Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat'liubvi*, 346–47.

76. Letter to A. A. Teskova, November 10, 1938. Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat' liubvi*, 367. On February 15, 1939, Teskova sends Tsvetaeva the story of the Prague Knight and a large-format photograph. She had looked all over Prague to find it, and therefore warned Tsvetaeva not to give it away, for she might not ever get another image. Tsvetaeva thanked Teskova for the photograph on May 22, 1939, and described how she had placed it in a large frame alongside another similar photograph: "I also hung another photograph—a very recent one that is amazingly similar: the same face—a random person on a bridge." Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat'liubvi*, 369.

77. Quoted in Schweitzer, *Tsvetaeva*, 341. For more on Tsvetaeva's response to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, see Schweitzer 341–44. For complete textual history, manuscript drafts, and archival documents relating to the composition of *Stikhi k Chekhii*, see Marina Tsvetaeva, *Gde moi dom?* (Moscow: Dom-muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 2000).

78. Both images are also reproduced in *Smert' Andreia Belogo (1880–1934). Dokumenty,*

nekrologi, pis'ma, dnevniki, posviashcheniia, portrety, ed. Monika Spivak and Elena Nasedkina (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2013).

79. S *vetopis' / fotografiia* translates to "writing with light, light-writing."

80. Tsvetaeva recalls Belyi's prophecy in her essay "Plennyi dukh" ("A Captive Spirit") and quotes his 1907 poem "To My Friends" (Druz'iam): "Andrei Belyi died from 'the sun's rays' according to his 1907 prophecy. 'I believed in the golden shine, / And died from the rays of the sun . . .'" Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 4:268.

81. Tsvetaeva, *SS*, 4:269.

82. Tsvetaeva's habit of sending photographs of herself, her children, and her travels to friends, family, and other correspondents is commonplace. Nonetheless, for Tsvetaeva there may have been particular literary antecedents associated with this practice. For instance, she apparently read each volume of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*); she read the first volume, *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann's Way*), in 1928. Proust's work contains numerous photographic motifs and exchanges of photographs between characters. For a detailed examination of the theme of photography in Proust's life and works, see Brassaï, *Proust in the Power of Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Thomas Baldwin, "Photography and Painting in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*," and Áine Larkin, "Photography in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*," both in *Text and Image in Modern European Culture*, ed. Natasha Grigorian, Thomas Baldwin, and Margaret Rigaud-Drayton (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012), 76–87 and 88–100. For more on Tsvetaeva and Proust, see Shevelenko, *Literaturnyi put' Tsvetaevoi*, 352–55.

83. "My companion [N. P. Gronskii] is an eighteen-year-old well-bred pup who teaches me everything he learned in high school (oh, there's so much!). And I teach him all I get from my notebook. After all, writing is not something you learn by just living your life. We trade schools. Except that I am self-taught. But both of us are excellent hikers [*otlichnye khodoki*]." Tsvetaeva to Teskova, April 10, 1928. Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat' liubvi*, 115.

84. Both Svetlana El'nitskaia and Alyssa Dinega Gillespie analyzed the alternation of nurturing and erotic imagery in Tsvetaeva's poem to Gronskii "Iunoshe v usta" (Into the Mouth of the Youth). See Svetlana El'nitskaia, "'Sto ikh, Igr i mod!' Stikhi Tsvetaevoi N. Gronskomu, 1928 g. Chast' pervaia," in *Stat'i o Marine Tsvetaevoi* (Moscow, Dom-muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 2004), 109–30 and Dinega, *A Russian Psyche*, 182–85.

85. Tsvetaeva to Gronskii, April 2, 1928. Tsvetaeva and Gronskii, *Neskol'ko udarov serdtsa*, 10.

86. Tsvetaeva to Sergei Efron, September 9, 1928. Tsvetaeva, *Neizdannoe*, 337–38.

87. The photographs are located in RGALI, f. 1190-2-256, and were first published in Molly Thomasy Blasing, "Through the Lens of Loss: Marina Tsvetaeva's Elegiac Photo-Poetics," *Slavic Review* 73, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 1–35. Dinega noted that the cycle of poems was written after the fortieth day following Gronskii's passing (Dinega, *A Russian Psyche*, 187). A diary entry from December 31, 1934, documents her visit to his grave on the fortieth day. Tsvetaeva's lines in the diary suggest she composed part of the poem graveside; they are remarkably similar to lines from the completed poem: "31go dek[abria] 1934 g.—sorokovoi den'. Ia stoiala na ego mogile i dumala: zdes' ego net, i tam ego net: zdes'—slyshkom mestno (tesno), tam—slyshkom prostorno (All), zdes'—slyshkom zdes', tam—slyshkom tam. *Gde*—togda?" (Tsvetaeva, *Svodnye tetradi*, 501). The photographs were taken within the forty-day period during which, according to Orthodox belief, the soul still inhabits the earth. This fact is important because the central theme of *Tombstone* is the search for the soul of the departed among his earthly possessions.

88. Stephen Cheeke, "Photography and Elegy," in *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis*

(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 142–61, 148.

89. Tsvetaeva and Gronskii, *Neskol'ko udarov serdtsa*, 206.

90. In an article on Tsvetaeva's elegiac mode in this cycle and Derzhavin's in his "Na smert' kniazia Meshcherskogo," Tamara Fokht sees a connection between these lines and Derzhavin's "Where a feast was once spread, there a coffin lies" ("Gde stol byl iastv, tam grob stoit"), which she argues are united by the theme of an "interrupted feast" (prervannoe zastol'e), with Gronskii's as a "creative feast" (tvorcheskoe zastol'e). Tamara Fokht, "Derzhavinskaia perefraza v poezii M. Tsvetaevoi," *Studia Russica Budapestinensia* 2–3 (1995): 234. See also Tsvetaeva's 1933 cycle of five poems *Table* (Stol), a paean to the writing desk: "My faithful writing desk! / Thank you for coming along / With me on all these paths. / You watch over me—like a temple." (Moi pis'mennyi vernyi stol! / Spasibo za to, chto shel / So mnoiu po vsem putiam. Menia okhranial—kak khram.). Tsvetaeva, *SS* 2:309. For more on Derzhavin's influence on Gronskii and Tsvetaeva, see Anna Lisa Crone and Alexandra Smith, "Cheating Death: Derzhavin and Tsvetaeva on the Immortality of the Poet," *Slavic Almanac: The South African Year Book for Slavic, Central and East European Studies* 3, no. 3–4 (1995): 1–30.

91. Tsvetaeva and Gronskii, *Neskol'ko udarov serdtsa*, 206.

92. "Kraski" here are not simply "paints" but a reference to icon painting, as in the title of a work by Evgenii Trubetskoi on Russian icon painting, *Umozrenie v kraskakh: Vopros o smysle zhizni v drevnerusskoi religioznoi zhivopisi* (Moscow: Tipografiia I.D. Sytina, 1916), which Tsvetaeva may very well have been familiar with. I am grateful to Irina Shevelenko for bringing this fact to my attention.

93. There are two versions of the legend of the *Acheiropoieton*, the image of the Savior-Not-Made-by-Hands. In Eastern Orthodox Christianity this figure is called the *Mandylion*, and its origin is considered to be the Image of Edessa, a holy relic sent in a letter from Jesus to King Abgar of Edessa. In Roman Catholicism, the icon's origin is traced to the Veil of Veronica, which was imprinted while Jesus was on the road to Calvary. L. M. Evseeva, A. Lidov, and N. Chugreeva, eds., *Spas nerukotvornyi v russkoi ikone* (Moscow: Moskovskie uchebniki i kartolitografiia, 2005), 12–39.

94. Tsvetaeva and Gronskii, *Neskol'ko udarov serdtsa*, 206.

95. Tsvetaeva and Gronskii, *Neskol'ko udarov serdtsa*, 206.

96. Nina Nikolaevna Gronskaia (1884–1958) was born Nina Slobodzinskaia in Pskov and grew up in St. Petersburg. She married P. P. Gronskii in 1903. (Her name after her second marriage was Lepekhina.) She began her studies of sculpting under L. V. Shervud and finished under Schwaegerle, a famous Munich sculptor. She was known for her sculpted portraits of contemporaries A. I. Denikin, P. N. Miliukov, V. A. Obolenskii, and B. A. Zaitsev. Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat' liubvi*, 250n3.

97. Tsvetaeva to Teskova, April 23, 1935. Tsvetaeva, *Spasibo za dolguiu pamiat'liubvi*, 265.

98. Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Trachtenberg, 244.

99. Sarah Anne Carter, "Picturing Rooms: Interior Photography 1870–1900," *History of Photography* 34, no. 3 (August 2010): 255.

100. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 17. Quoted in Carter, "Picturing Rooms," 255.

101. Anastasiia Tsvetaeva, *Vospominaniia*, 1:733–34.

102. For more on the practice of spirit photography, see Clément Chéroux et al., eds., *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

103. Tsvetaeva and Gronskii, *Neskol'ko udarov serdtsa*, 207.

104. Iosif Brodskii, *Brodskii o Tsvetaevoi* (Moscow: Nezavisimaia gazeta, 1997), 78.

105. The photographs were preserved and given to RGALI by Ariadna Efron, who included handwritten commentary detailing precisely when and where they were taken. RGALI

1190-2-256, no. 11.

106. See, for example, Rosalind Krauss, Jane Livingston, and Dawn Ades, eds., *L'Amour Fou: Photography and Surrealism* (New York: Abbeville, 1985) and Vladimir Birgus, ed., *Czech Photographic Avant-Garde, 1918–1948* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

107. Sergei Efron's father, Iakov Konstantinovich Efron, died from illness in Paris in 1909. The following year, Iakov's youngest son, Konstantin, committed suicide; when Konstantin's mother, Elizaveta Durnovo-Efron, discovered her son had killed himself, she hanged herself the same day.

108. The nameplate was salvaged by the German Tsvetaeva scholar Marie-Louise Bott just before the grave was scheduled to be dismantled due to the expiration of funds for the plot. It is now housed in the Tsvetaeva House Museum in Moscow. The inscription reads:

ЯКОВЪ ЭФРОНЪ	IAKOV EFRON
ЕЛИЗАВЕТА ЕФРОНЪ-ДУРНОВО	ELIZAVETA EFRON-DURNOVO
И СЫНЪ ИХ	AND THEIR SON
КОНСТАНТИНЪ	KONSTANTIN

For more on the history and dramatic fate of this nameplate, see M. L. Bott, "Pamiati Mikhaila Leonidovicha Gasparova: Peredacha nadgrobnoi plity Efronov v Dom-muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi," in *Liki Mariny Tsvetaevoi: XIII mezhdunarodnaia nauchno-tematicheskaia konferenstiia (9–12 oktiabria 2005 goda)*; *Sbornik dokladov*, ed. I. Iu. Beliakova (Moscow: Dom-Muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 2006), 581–90.

109. Marina Tsvetaeva to Vladimir Sosinskii, June 15, 1938. Tsvetaeva, *SS* 7:91.

110. See Tsvetaeva's letter to Sergei Efron's sister, Elizaveta Iakovlevna Efron, dated February 7, 1939, in which she comments on the grave and the enclosed images. Tsvetaeva, *Neizdannoe*, 384.

111. In some of her early poems, Tsvetaeva meditates on her death and imagines encounters with her alter ego in a posthumous time and place. These include "Idesh′ na menia pokhozhii . . ." (1913), "Nastanet den′—pechal′nyi govoriat! . . ." (1916), and "Tebe—cherez sto let" (1919). Although we should not assume that thoughts of death were necessarily at the forefront of Tsvetaeva's mind at this time, it is important to remember that the poet committed suicide in 1941. On the subject of Tsvetaeva's responses to the suicides of Esenin and Mayakovsky, see Olga Peters Hasty, "Reading Suicide: Tsvetaeva on Esenin and Maiakovskii," *Slavic Review* 50, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 836–46.

112. Agamben, "Judgment Day," in *Profanations*, 24.

Chapter 3. Framing Memory

1. Bengt Jangfelt, *Iazyk est′ Bog. Zametki ob Iosife Brodskom* (Moscow: CORPUS. Izdatel′stvo Astrel′, 2012), 360.

2. Similar remarks appear in David Bethea, *Joseph Brodsky and the Creation of Exile* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) and John Givens, "The Anxiety of a Dedication: Joseph Brodsky's 'kvintet/sextet' and Mark Strand," *Russian Literature* 37, no. 2 (1995): 203–26.

3. Lev Losev, *Iosif Brodskii: Opyt literaturnoi biografii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2011), 21.

4. Vladislav Khodasevich, who authored the poem *Sorrentinskie fotografii*, also had a photographer-father, Felitsian Khodasevich. For more on the influence of Khodasevich's father's work on his writing, see Margarita Nafpaktitis, "Multiple Exposures of the Photographic Motif in Vladislav Khodasevich's 'Sorrentinskie fotografii," 389–413 and Bethea, "Sorrento Photographs."

5. Joseph Brodsky, "In a Room and a Half" in *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (New York:

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986), 475.

6. Iosif Brodskii and Gennadii Komarov, *Sochineniia Iosifa Brodskogo* (St. Petersburg: Pushkinskii fond, 1997), 1:151; my translation. From here on, *Sochineniia* is referred to as *Sochineniia* vol:page. For analysis of this text, see Jadwiga Szymak-Reiferowa, "Zofia," in *Kak rabotaet stikhotvorenie Brodskogo*, ed. Valentina Polukhina and Lev Losev (Moscow: NLO, 2002), 10–32. On Brodsky and photography, see Joanna Madloch's "'Predstavlenie' Josifa Brodskiego: Synteza poezii i fotografii," in *Przeglą d Rusycystyczny* 1, no. 113 (2006): 36–50; "Kak prochitat' fotografiiu. Analiz stikhotvoreniia 'My zhili v gorode tsveta okamenevshei vodki . . .' / 'A Photograph,'" in *Iosif Brodskii: Problemy poetiki*, ed. A. G. Stepanov, I. V. Fomenko, and S. Iu. Artemova (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012), 244–54; and "How to Read a Poetic Photo-Text," in *Text and Image in Modern European Culture*, ed. Natasha Grigorian, Thomas Baldwin, and Margaret Rigaud-Drayton (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012), 157–70. The subject of Brodsky and the visual arts is explored in J. Szymak-Reiforowa, "Iosif Brodskii i zhivopis' Eduarda Viuiiara (E. Vuillard)," *Studia Rossica* 5 (1997): 199–209.

7. Polukhina, *Kniga interv'iu*, 620.

8. "Fotograf sredi korablei" exists in manuscript form in Vladimir Maramzin's samizdat archive of Brodsky's writings. Losev, *Iosif Brodskii*, 338.

9. Losev, *Iosif Brodskii*, 21

10. Losev, *Iosif Brodskii*, 21. Brodsky also mentions working as a photographer in an interview with Evgenii Rein in Polukhina, *Kniga interv'iu*, 425.

11. Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 285–308.

12. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 296.

13. Brodsky, *Sochineniia*, 1:134.

14. Joseph Brodsky, "Christmas Ballad," in *Nativity Poems*, trans. Glyn Maxwell (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 3.

15. *I liazhet put' moi cherez etot gorod*, directed by Elena Iakovich and Aleksei Shishov (Moscow: Pervaia videokompaniia, 2008), DVD, 50:00–52:00; translation is mine.

16. For more on the subject of Brodsky as tourist and travel writer, see Bozena Shallcross, *Through the Poet's Eyes: The Travels of Zagajewski, Herbert and Brodsky* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002); and Sanna Turoma, *Brodsky Abroad: Empire, Tourism, Nostalgia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

17. Joseph Brodsky, *Watermark* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1992), 79. For analysis of the artists mentioned here in the context of Brodsky's life and works, see David MacFadyen, *Joseph Brodsky and the Baroque* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 183–85.

18. Brodsky, "In a Room and a Half," 501; cited in Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 296.

19. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 296.

20. This quotation is an allusion to Pushkin's "To the Sea" (K moriu) and Tsvetaeva's commentary on this poem in her autobiographical essay *My Pushkin*. Brodsky, "In a Room and a Half," in *Less Than One*, 471.

21. Alexander Badin's interview with Brodsky for *Voice of America* (1987), cited in Lev Loseff and Valentina Polukhina, *Joseph Brodsky: The Art of a Poem* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), 216.

22. *From Nowhere with Love* (Neotkuda s liubov'iu), directed by Elena Iakovich and Aleksei Shishov (Moscow: Pervaia videokompaniia, 2000), DVD, 20:05.

23. Brodsky, "In a Room and a Half," in *Less Than One*, 465.

24. Brodsky, *Watermark*, 42–43.

25. For more on Brodsky's Nativity poems, see Mina Todorova Brenneman, "Beyond the Lessing Impasse: Intersemiotic Dialogue in Joseph Brodsky's Nativity Poems" (PhD diss., Yale

University, 2006).

26. "Stikhotvorenie—eto fotografiia dushi," Bengt Jangfeldt interview with Joseph Brodsky, originally in *Expressens*. April 3, 1987. Reprinted in *Brodskii. Kniga interv'iu*, 309.

27. Brodsky, "Guide to a Renamed City," in *Less Than One*, 69.

28. Sontag, *On Photography*, 163–64.

29. Brodsky, "Guide to a Renamed City," in *Less Than One*, 77.

30. Brodsky, "Guide," in *Less Than One*, 88.

31. Brodsky, "Guide," in *Less Than One*, 91.

32. Eduardo Cadava and Paola Cortes-Rocca, "Notes on Love and Photography," *October* 116 (Spring 2006): 5.

33. The location of the photo is symbolic for its relationship to Brodsky's early development as a poet; it was at a bookstore in Yakutsk that he first discovered the poet Baratynsky, who had an enormous influence on his elegiac poetry and his decision to turn to poetry as a vocation. See interview with Evgenii Rein in Polukhina, *Bol'shaia kniga interv'iu*, 425.

34. "Aeroport, gde bol'she mne ne prizemlit'sia. Ne goriuite," in *Brodsky: A Personal Memoir*, trans. Liudmila Shtern (Fort Worth, TX: Baskerville, 2004), 64. The original Russian version is Liudmila Shtern, *Brodskii: Osia, Iosif, Joseph* (Moscow: Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 2001).

35. Interview with Bengt Jangfeldt in Jangfeldt, *Iazyk est' Bog. Zametki ob Iosife Brodskom*, 80. In an interview with Sven Birkerts in 1979, Brodsky reiterates this sentiment: "However, if I were to summarize, my main interest is the nature of time. That's what interests me most of all. What time can do to a man. That's one of the closest insights into the nature of time that we're allowed to have." In *Joseph Brodsky: Conversations*, ed. Cynthia Haven (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 73.

36. *Sochineniia* 2:360; my translation.

37. The photograph of Brodsky at the gathering with Auden, Spender, and John Asbury in London in 1972 at Poetry International was published in several places, including the insert to Polukhina, *Kniga interv'iu*, 384–85.

38. Brodsky, "In Memory of Stephen Spender," in *On Grief and Reason* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 465–66.

39. Turoma, *Brodsky Abroad*, 3–4.

40. Brodsky mistakenly ascribes this quotation from Heraclites to Archimedes.

41. *Joseph Brodsky: A Maddening Space*, Mystic Fire Video, 1991, 30:00–37:00.

42. Valentina Polukhina, *Brodskii glazami sovremennikov* (St. Petersburg: Zvezda, 1997), 42.

43. Sergey Kuznetsov, "Darling, tonight I went out late . . .," in *Joseph Brodsky: The Art of a Poem*, ed. Lev Losev and Valentina Polukhina (New York: Palgrave, 1999), 218.

44. *Sochineniia*, 4:64.

45. Brodsky, "Brise Marine," in *Collected Poems in English* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 364.

46. *Sochineniia*, 4:64.

47. Brodsky, *Collected Poems in English*, 364.

48. *Sochineniia*, 4:64.

49. Brodsky, *Collected Poems in English*, 364.

50. Kuznetsov, "Darling, tonight I went out late . . .," 217–18.

51. Joseph Brodsky Papers, GEN MSS 613, Box 193, Folder 4240, Ramunas and Elia Katilius family archive, 1960s–1970s. The Katiliuses estimate that the note is from 1970 or 1971. Personal correspondence, June 18, 2013.

52. A similar notion is expressed in the following lines from *Litovskii noktiurn*: "There exist places / where nothing changes. They are / substitutes for memory, the fixative." *Sochineniia*, 3:52.

53. *Sochineniia*, 4:64.

54. Brodsky, *Collected Poems in English*, 364.

55. "The inexhaustible, maddening preoccupation of all these pilasters, colonnades, porticoes hints at the nature of this urban narcism [*sic*], hints at the possibility that at least in the inanimate world water may be regarded as a condensed form of time." Brodsky, "Guide to a Renamed City," in *Less Than One*, 77.

56. Brodsky, "Uncommon Visage: The Nobel Lecture," in *On Grief and Reason*, 56–57.

57. Poems explicitly titled "Postcard" include "Otkrytka iz goroda K." (1968); "Otkrytka iz Lissabona" (1988); "A Postcard from France" (part of a series of shorts or epigrams written in English, published in *Occasional Stiles*, Yale University, 1992); "A Postcard from Iceland" (written in English, 1978); "A Postcard" (written in English and published in October 1994 in *The Times Literary Supplement*, alongside "A Photograph," Brodsky's auto-translation of "My zhili v gorode tsveta okamenevshei vodki"). Note also the way Brodsky conjures a postcard in the following lines from "Novaia zhizn'": "V novoi zhizni mgnoven'iu ne govoriat "postoi": / ostanovivshis', ono bystro idet nasmarku. / Da i gliantsa v chertakh tvoikh khvatit uzhe, chtob s toi / ikh storony cherknut' "privet" i prikleit' marku." *Sochineniia*, 4:49.

58. *Sochineniia*, 3:169.

59. Brodsky, "A Polar Explorer," in *Collected Poems in English*, 214.

60. *Sochineniia*, III:169.

61. Brodsky, "A Polar Explorer," 214.

62. Osip Mandel'shtam, "O sobesednike," in Mandel'shtam and V. A. Chalmaev *Shum vremeni: Memuarnaia proza, pis'ma, zapisnye knizhki* (Moscow: OLMA-Press, 2003), 128.

63. Peter Viereck (1916–2006) was a poet and professor of history who was instrumental in bringing Brodsky to Mount Holyoke in 1974. See Viereck's poems to Brodsky "Gate Talk for Brodsky" and "At My Hospital Window," *Humanitas* 10, no. 2, 1997. See also commentary by Viereck and transcript of Lynette Labinger's interview with Brodsky on behalf of Viereck in 1970 in "A Conversation with Joseph Brodsky," in *Joseph Brodsky*, ed. Haven, 3–6. Brodsky also wrote a rhymed foreword for Viereck's *Tide and Continuities*. The photograph is available in a poor xerox copy in the Joseph Brodsky Papers. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. GEN MSS 613 Box 193 Folder 4247.

64. Peter Viereck, *Terror and Decorum: Poems 1940–1948* (New York: Scribner, 1950), 14.

65. Valentina Polukhina, *Brodsky through the Eyes of His Contemporaries* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 375.

66. Madloch, "Kak prochitat' fotografiiu," 245.

67. *Sochineniia*, 4:174

68. Translation in Brodsky, *Collected Poems in English*, 444.

69. Madloch, "How to Read a Poetic Photo-Text," 157–70; Madloch, "Kak prochitat' fotografiiu," 244–54. See also my reading in chapter 2 of Tsvetaeva's "Dom" ("Iz-pod nakhmurennykh brovei") as a poem that imitates a photograph.

70. Madloch, "How to Read A Poetic Photo-Text," 162.

71. Madloch, "Kak prochitat' fotografiiu," 249, 250.

72. Joseph Brodsky, "A Stop in the Desert," trans. Jamie Fuller (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1966 [samizdat broadside edition]).

73. Joseph Brodsky, "Foreword," in *An Age Ago: A Selection of Nineteenth-Century Russian Poetry*, trans. Alan Meyers (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988), xi.

74. On this notion of poetry as "accelerated thinking" in Brodsky, Susan Sontag writes, "[Brodsky] insisted that poetry's 'job' (a much-used word) was to explore the capacity of language to travel farther, faster. Poetry, he said, is accelerated thinking. It was his best argument, and he made many, on behalf of the superiority of poetry to prose, for he considered rhyme essential to this process. An ideal of mental acceleration is the key to his

great achievement (and its limits), in prose as well as poetry, and to his indelible presence." Susan Sontag, "Joseph Brodsky," in *Later Essays*, ed. David Reiff (New York: Library of America, 2017), 524–26.

75. Brodsky, *Less Than One*, 364.

76. Brodsky, *Less Than One*, 370.

77. See similar stories of lost photographs in chapter 2 and chapter 4 of this book. Note the closeness in how Tsvetaeva speaks about a photograph of Belyi and Brodsky's reading of Auden's photograph ("caught unawares, in passage").

78. Brodsky, *Less than One*, 371, 373–74.

79. Brodsky, *Watermark*, 21.

80. *Sochineniia*, 3: 52.

81. Brodsky, "Lithuanian Nocturne," in *Collected Poems in English*, 219–20.

82. Venclova, "Lithuanian Nocturne," in *Art of a Poem*, ed. Loseff and Polukhina, 139.

83. Brodsky's introductory remarks for a reading by Mark Strand at the Academy of American Poets in New York City on November 4, 1986, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/01/08/mark-strand-1934-2014/.

84. Denis Akhapkin, *Iosif Brodskii posle Rossii. Kommentarii k stikham 1972–1995* (St. Petersburg: Zhurnal "Zvezda," 2009), 71.

85. David Rigsbee, *Styles of Ruin* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 126.

86. Georges Nivat, "The Ironic Journey into Antiquity," in *Brodsky's Poetics and Aesthetics*, ed. Losev and Polukhina, 91.

87. Rigsbee, *Styles of Ruin*, 126.

88. Brodsky was intimately familiar with Pushkin's corpus and responded to his great predecessor in a well-known parody of Pushkin's love lyric "Ia Vas liubil" in his *Dvadtsat' sonetov k Marii Stiuart*. In exploring Brodsky's photo-poetic response to the Pushkinian "Ia pamiatnik sebe vozdvig" it is worth noting Pushkin's fraught relationship with portraiture. In a letter to his wife Pushkin expressed disgust at the idea of having his portrait painted. It is somewhat paradoxical then that Brodsky, in playing with Pushkin's "Pamiatnik" poem is using the visual image to reinforce things about the written word. Still, Brodsky suggests in this text that the dynamic nature of poetry is perhaps a more fitting memento to pass to the future than a static photograph. At the same time, the camera lens is figured as a continually evolving time-space; static portraits are not part of the photo-poetic discourse of the poem.

89. *Sochineniia*, 3:229.

90. Brodsky, *Collected Poems in English*, 276.

91. Walter Benjamin, "Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility," Second Version (1936), in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 3, 1931–1938* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), 117; quoted in Smith and Sliwinski, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*, 8.

92. Dana Gioia, "The Magical Value of Manuscripts," in *The Hand of the Poet*, ed. Rodney Phillips et al. (New York: Rizzoli International, 1997), 4.

93. I am grateful to Bella Grigoryan, S. A. Karpukhin, Alexandra Sherman, Irina Shevelenko, Maria Khotimsky, and Grigori Utgof for their assistance in deciphering Brodsky's handwriting. Any remaining transcription errors are my own.

94. Brodsky, "Altra Ego," in *On Grief and Reason*, 93.

Chapter 4. Poetic Mothers in the Photo Frame

1. John Hollander, "The Poetics of *Ekphrasis*," *Word & Image* 4 (1988): 209–19.

2. One of the most powerful examples of writing about imagined photographs in the Russian literary tradition is Khodasevich's *Sorrento Photographs*. While Khodasevich was undoubtedly influenced by the actual photographs taken by Maxim Gorky's son while

visiting Sorrento, the double-exposed images he conjures as the key framing device for the poema are a product of the poet's creative imagination. My investigation of the Gorky Museum archive in Moscow in 2009 yielded many photographs from Sorrento, but not one was a double-exposed image.

3. The *shestidesiatniki*—"the 1960s generation" or "persons of the 1960s"—is a term used for the post–World War II liberal intelligentsia, a community of artists, writers, musicians, academics, scientists, and filmmakers who came of age in the era following Stalinism and during the cultural Thaw under Nikita Khrushchev. For a cultural history of this period, see Vladislav M. Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

4. Sibelan Forrester, "Reading for a Self: Self-Definition and Female Ancestry in Three Russian Poems," *Russian Review* 55, no. 1 (January 1996): 21–36. Forrester considers the context of Russian women poets of the Silver Age (Tsvetaeva, Sofia Parnok, and Maria Shkapskaia) writing about their female relatives, but the argument can be extended to interpoetic influence as well.

5. Susan E. Reid, "Photography in the Thaw," *Art Journal* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 33–39, 33. The period of cultural and political liberalization after the death of Stalin is known as the Thaw (ottepel'). The term was coined by the writer Ilya Ehrenburg in the title of his 1954 novella. This period of Soviet life under Khrushchev was the beginning of the reckoning with the atrocities committed under Stalin and a loosening of the restrictions on artistic expression in the Soviet Union. For an in-depth consideration of a number of aspects of social and political life in the USSR during this period, see Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd, eds., *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

6. J. M. Werneke, "*Sovetskoe foto* and Photography Clubs in the Late Soviet Period," *Studia Culturae* 3, no. 29 (2016): 65–72 and J. M. Werneke, "Reimagining the History of the Avant-garde: Photography and the Journal *Sovetskoe foto* in the 1950s and Early 1960s," *Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 44, no. 3 (2017): 264–91.

7. Kozlov details the way that this term "the Terror" and similar lexical items designating the Stalinist purges are primarily imported calques and that Soviet culture resisted a specific lexical designation for many years. Denis Kozlov, *The Readers of* Novyi Mir*: Coming to Terms with the Stalinist Past* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 171–72.

8. Kozlov, *The Readers of* Novyi Mir, 7–8.

9. Anatolii Lunacharskii, "Nasha kul'tura i fotografiia," *Sovetskoe foto*, no. 1 (1926): 2.

10. P. Satiukov, "Sovetskii fotozhurnalist—pravdivyi letopisets velikoi epokhi, razvedchik budushchego," *Sovetskoe Foto* 1 (January 1961): 1. Translated and quoted in Reid, "Photography in the Thaw," 33. For a similar proclamation from 1964 and analysis of the art versus document tension, see Werneke, "Reimagining the History of the Avant-Garde," 5–6.

11. Wolf, "When Photographs Speak, To Whom Do They Talk?"

12. Reischl, *Photographic Literacy*, 221, 223–28.

13. José Vergara, "The Distorted Images and Realities of Andrei Bitov's Literary Photographs," *Russian Review* 77 (April 2018): 261.

14. Ellen Chances, *Andrei Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); T. L. Rybal'chenko, "Motiv fotografii v proze A. Bitova," in *Materialy k "Slovariu siuzhetov i motivov russkoi literatury": Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ed. V. I. Tiura (Novosibirsk, 1996), 1:178–91; Sven Spieker, *Figures of Memory and Forgetting in Andrej Bitov's Prose: Postmodernism and the Quest for History* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996).

15. Vergara, "The Distorted Images," 271–78.

16. On the cultural history of the Metropol affair, see Sophie Pinkham, "*Zdesizdat* and Discursive Rebellion: The Metropol Affair," *Ulbandus Review* 17, A Culture of Institutions /

Institutions of Culture (2016): 127–45.

17. E. Gessen, "Glotok svobody," *Grani* 41, no. 140 (1986): 163–64.

18. For an overview of Soviet nonconformist photography experiments from the 1950s to the 1980s, see Diane Neumaier, ed., *Beyond Memory: Soviet Nonconformist Photography and Photo-Related Works of Art*, Dodge Soviet Nonconformist Art Publication Series (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004). Important collections combining photography and poetry for the Metarealists include Ivan Zhdanov, *Vozdukh i veter: Sochineniia i fotografiii* (Moscow: Russkii Gulliver, 2006) and a volume of Parshchikov's works illustrated with X-rays of his body, his 1996 *Vybrannoe* (Moscow: IT-s Garant, 1996). Also of interest is Zhdanov's poetry collection *Fotorobot zapretnogo mira* (St. Petersburg: Pushkinskii fond, 1997) and essays by Parshchikov on photography, including "Snimaiu ne ia, snimaet kamera" and "2000 kadrov v sekundu" collected in Aleksei Parshchikov, *Rai medlennogo ognia* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006). See chapter 5 of this book for more on Arkadii Dragomoshchenko's poetry and photography.

19. For a famous photographer's reminiscences on the experience of photographing Akhmadulina, see photojournalist Iurii Rost's interview, "Ustami Belly govoril Bog," in *Bella: Vstrechi vosled*, ed. Marina Zavada and Iurii Kulikov (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2017), 86–113.

20. The essay also serves as the opening piece for her volume of collected essays published the same year. Bella Akhmadulina, *Mig bytiia* (Moscow: Agraf, 1997).

21. This parenthetical remark describes in detail several turn of the century photographs that are not included in the pages of the book, in a manner similar to Barthes's exclusion of the Winter Garden photograph that is so central to his meditations in *Camera Lucida*.

22. Bella Akhmadulina, "Fotografii raznogo vremeni," in *Bella Akhmadulina: Fotografii 50-e/90-e gody* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo PAN, 1997), iii-ix.

23. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 77.

24. See chapter 2 of this book for an extensive summary of theoretical writings on photography and death.

25. Akhmadulina, "Fotografiia raznogo vremeni," iv.

26. Andrei Sakharov (1921–89)—nuclear physicist, dissident, human rights activist; Stanislav Neigauz (1927–80)—world-renowned concert pianist, son of famous pianist Genrikh Neigauz, stepson of Boris Pasternak; Vladimir Vysotskii (1938–80)—influential Russian singer-songwriter, poet, actor; Aleksandr Tyshler (1898–1980)—Ukrainian painter, graphic artist, sculptor, theater designer; Nadezhda Mandelshtam (1899–1980)—Russian writer, memoirist, and wife of poet Osip Mandelshtam; Vladimir Voinovich (1932–2018)—Russian writer and dissident who was stripped of his citizenship and forced into exile by Soviet authorities in 1980, later rehabilitated and returned to Moscow in 1990; Vasily Aksenov (1932–2009)—prominent novelist, a leading figure among the *shetstidesiatniki*, who spent over two decades in emigration in the United States but whose Soviet/Russian citizenship was returned to him in 1990.

27. Bella Akhmadulina, "Litso i golos," in *Mig bytiia*, 70–78.

28. Akhmadulina, "Litso i golos," 70–71.

29. Susan Sontag, "Photography: A Little Summa," in *Later Essays*, ed. David Rieff (New York: Library of America, 2017), 723.

30. Bella Akhmadulina and Boris Messerer, *Pis'ma Belly* (Moscow: Art Volkhonka, 2017), 214–15.

31. Akhmadulina, "Mig bytiia," 71.

32. Akhmadulina and Messerer, *Pis'ma Belly*, 220–21.

33. Akhmadulina and Messerer, Messerer's footnote "O starykh fotografiiakh," in *Pis'ma*

Belly, 220.

34. Bella Akhmadulina, "Posviashchenie damam i gospodam, zapechatlennym fotografom letom 1913 goda," in *Sochineniia* (Moscow: PAN, 1997), 559–62.

35. For a comparative study of poems from the second half of the twentieth century by Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin, and Douglas Dunn inspired by World War I photographs of men who would die in battle, see Sally Minogue and Andrew Palmer, "'Horrors Here Smile': The Poem, the Photograph and the *Punctum*," *Word & Image* 29, no. 2 (2013): 203–11.

36. Akhmadulina, "Posviashchenie damam i gospodam," 559.

37. Akhmadulina, "Posviashchenie damam i gospodam," 562.

38. This is also the title of a 1983 poem by Akhmadulina. Bella Akhmadulina, *Mnogo sobak i Sobaka. Proza raznykh let* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2005), 340–49.

39. Joseph Brodsky, "Why Russian Poets?," *Vogue* 167, no. 7 (July 1977): 112. Akhmadulina was born in 1937, at the height of Stalin's purges.

40. Elaine Feinstein recalls Akhmadulina reciting for her a version of this poem in Paris in 1974. As Feinstein recounts, Akhmadulina conveyed "a sense of almost personal responsibility toward them." The translation of the text she heard at that time is below (and differs from published versions of the poem):

> This generation demands performance. The guilt of that
> I take on without either gift or desire for it,
> for your sake I take on the shame of pretense
> so that in me may be seen some hint of the past,
> of how it might be with Marina and Anna alive
> when poetry and conscience could live together.

Elaine Feinstein, "Poetry and Conscience: Russian Women Poets of the Twentieth Century," in *Women Writing and Writing about Women* (London: Routledge, 2014), 133.

41. Bella Akhmadulina, *Metel'. Stikhi* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1977), 21.

42. Tatiana Aleshka, *Tvorchestvo B. Akhmadulinoi v kontekste traditsii russkoi poezii* (Minsk: RIVSh Belorusskogo Gostudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2001), 84.

43. "O Marine Tsvetaevoi. Vystuplenie v Literaturnom muzee," in *Mnogo sobak i sobaka. Proza raznykh let* (Moscow: EKSMO, 2005), 505, quoted in Aleshka, *Tvorchestvo B. Akhmadulinoi*, 84. In the published version of this same speech, Akhmadulina refers to a passage in Ariadna Efron's memoirs, which confirms her sense of the limitations of Akhmatova's "perfection." Tsvetaeva is reported to have said about Akhmatova, "Ona—sovershenstvo, i v etom, uvy, ee predel" ("She is perfection and that, alas, is her limitation"). Ariadna Efron, *Stranitsy vospominanii*, *Zvezda*, no. 3 (1973): 177, quoted in Akhmadulina, *Mnogo sobak i sobaka*, 505.

44. "Vsekh obozhanii bedstvie ogromno" is also the first line of a 1983 poem by Akhmadulina.

45. Akhmadulina, *Mig bytiia*, 80.

46. Akhmatova was, at the time, traveling in Italy with Nikolai Gumilev. The couple left St. Petersburg on April 3, 1912, traveled through Germany and Switzerland, stopping in the Italian resort town of Ospedaletti, where Gumilev's niece (dvoiurodnaia plemiannitsa), Ol'ga Kuz'mina-Karavaeva, hosted them for a week. They continued their travels around Italy, Austria, Poland, and Ukraine through the middle of May 1912. Though Akhmadulina does not mention it explicitly, Akhmatova was pregnant with her son, who was born that autumn. I. Ivanova and N. Gromova, *Beg vremeni: Fotoletopis' Anny Akhmatovoi* (St. Petersburg: Muzei Anny Akhmatovoi v Fontannom Dome, 2011–12), 15.

47. Bella Akhmadulina, interview with Dmitrii Gordon, *Bul'var Gordona*, no. 35, August 31, 2010, http://www.bulvar.com.ua/arch/2010/35/4c7d4edb1387b/.

48. D. A. Masleeva details the provenance of these images in "Mifopoetizatsiia Anny Akhmatovoi v stikhitvorenii B. Akhmadulinoi 'Snimok,'" *Vestnik Udmurtskogo Universiteta* 27, no. 3 (2017): 386–89.

49. Akhmadulina's poem represents a text within a broader constellation of texts that treat the shadow of violence that surrounds a good deal of twentieth-century Russian photography, from wartime images and especially the startled look in the prison photos of victims of the Great Terror. Such photographs, many taken within forty-eight hours of the executions, were part of the routine police procedures and included in the NKVD files of the imprisoned and executed. Such images were featured in the "Convicted" section of contemporary Polish photographer Tomasz Kinzy's 2016 exhibit, co-curated with the Memorial Foundation, titled *Bol'shoi Terror* (The Great Terror). The exhibit features 400 photographs of prisoners from police files of those executed at the height of Stalin's horrific purges of 1937–38. Photographs were also routinely used in NKVD interrogations, where those under questioning were asked to "identify" individuals under suspicion from photographs. The opening passages of Akhmatova's *Requiem*, her narrative poem in memory of the victims of the Terror, includes ironic use of the verb "poznat'" (to identify, as in a prison lineup or police photograph) as she describes being recognized ("identified") while standing in line among the scores of mothers waiting for news of their imprisoned sons and spouses.

50. For analysis of other ways Akhmadulina uses elements of the natural world to immobilize, see Sonia Ketchian, *The Poetic Craft of Bella Akhmadulina* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 28.

51. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 94. For more on the problem of the photograph's "destructible materiality," see Christopher Rovee, "Secrets of Paper," *Word & Image* 30, no. 4 (2014): 388–400.

52. Daria Alekseevna Masleeva, "Poeticheskoe vospriiatie Anny Akhmatovoi v lirike B. Akhmadulinoi," *Vestnik Udmurtskogo universiteta*, no. 4 (2014): 74.

53. This enjambment, Masleeva argued, accompanied the "final embodiment of the Great Artist (*Khudozhnik*)." Masleeva, "Poeticheskoe vospriiatie Anny Akhmatovoi," 74.

54. Masleeva, "Poeticheskoe vospriiatie Anny Akhmatovoi," 388.

55. Akhmadulina's poems connected with Tsvetaeva are "Uroki muzyki" (1963), "Chetvert' veka, Marina, tomu . . ." (1966), "Biograficheskaia spravka" (1967), "Klianus'" (1968). Akhmadulina was drawn to the idea of Tsvetaeva's tragic fate and was enthralled by way her own life was connected to Tsvetaeva's. When visiting Yelabuga, she was gifted the small notebook found in Tsvetaeva's pocket after her suicide. In the wake of the Metropol' fallout at the end of the 1970s, Akhmadulina retreated to Tarusa, where Tsvetaeva had spent summers in childhood, and wrote her cycle *Tarusa* there; the poems of this collection contain many Tsvetaevian themes. In addition, Akhmadulina wrote three essays about Tsvetaeva: "Prekrasnyi obraz," a presentation for the seventieth anniversary of Tsvetaeva's birth; "O Marine Tsvetaevoi," for a 1978 talk at the Literaturnyi muzei; "Bozh'ei milost'iu," a presentation in 1982 for the ninetieth anniversary of Tsvetaeva's birth. For more on these connections, see D. A. Masleeva, "Dialog poeticheskikh mirov: Bella Akhmadulina—Marina Tsvetaeva," *Vestnik Udmurtskogo universiteta*, no. 2 (2014): 173–78.

56. Ivan Nichiporov, "Obrazy poetov v stikhotvoreniiakh B. Akhmadulinoi," *Filologiia*, n.d., https://www.portal-slovo.ru/philology/45972.php.

57. Feinstein, "Poetry and Conscience," 148.

58. Masleeva notes that the image of the throat or larynx (gorlo/gortan') is connected with the speech and silencing of the poet as well as her suicide. We find this throat imagery in "Uroki muzyki," "Klianus'," and "Biograficheskaia spravka." Masleeva, "Poeticheskoe vospriiatie Anny Akhmatovoi," 175.

59. Svetlana Saltanova, *Marina Tsvetaeva: Vozvrashchenie: Sud'ba tvorcheskogo naslediia poeta na fone sovetskoi epokhi, 1941–1961 gody* (Moscow: Dom-muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 2015), 299–300. Original letters quoted in Saltanova are found in RGALI f. 1190 op. 3 ed. kh. 500, ll 1–21.

60. See Diana Knight, *Barthes and Utopia. Space, Travel, Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 265–66; Margaret Olin, "Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes's 'Mistaken' Identification," *Representations* 80 (2002): 99–118.

61. Olin, "Touching Photographs," 107.

62. Sontag, *On Photography*, 70.

63. Lisa Saltzman, *Daguerreotypes: Fugitive Subjects, Contemporary Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), book jacket description.

64. Saltzman, *Daguerreotypes*, book jacket description, 45, 74.

65. Sontag, *On Photography*, 14.

66. Minogue and Palmer, "'Horrors Here Smile,'" 204.

67. This recalls Wisława Szymborska's "Fotografia z 11 września" ("Photograph from September 11th") about the photograph of the bodies of those who threw themselves from the Twin Towers in New York City after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Tylko dwie rzeczy mogę dla nich zrobić /—opisać ten lot / i nie dodawać ostatniego zdania. (There are only two things I can do for them / Describe their flight / And not add the final line. [or: Leave off the final line])

68. Akhmadulina, "O Marine Tsvetaevoi," 498–99.

Chapter 5. Darkroom of Dreams

1. Instrumental in this shift in photo-poetics toward the optical unconscious is the poetic movement known as Metarealism (or less commonly, Metametaphorism), founded in 1979 on the notion that through metaphor the poet can access or create new worlds. The highly complex writing of the Metarealists (e.g., Zhdanov, Parshchikov, and Mikhail Eremenko) offers a means to access a different way of conceiving and representing the inner workings of the mind and the experience of being in the world, be it this world, or a world beyond this realm. Two of the three original members of the Metarealists, Parshchikov and Zhdanov, have been practicing photographers as well as poets. The intersection of photography and poetic writing in the Metarealists is a topic worthy of further study.

2. Lyn Hejinian, "Everything Is Imminent in Anything: An Essay on Fending off Chaos," *Lithub*, July 5, 2018, https://lithub.com/lyn-hejinian-everything-is-imminent-in-anything. The article is an excerpt from Hejinian's book *Positions of the Sun* (Brooklyn, NY: Belladonna Collaborative, 2018).

3. A fascinating introduction to Hejinian and Dragomoshchenko's creative partnership is a documentary film by Jacki Ochs, *Letters Not about Love* (Human Arts Association Film, 1998), which features letters exchanged, at Ochs's request, between the two poets. The letters comprise their meditations on the meaning of individual words—for example, home, neighbor, school, work, violence, books, windows—in their lives and their respective cultures. Hejinian is also the translator, with Elena Balashova, of Dragomoshchenko's collections *Description* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1990) and *Xenia* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994). For a scholarly treatment of Hejinian and Dragomoshchenko, see Stephanie Sandler, "Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, Lyn Hejinian, and the Persistence of Romanticism,." *Contemporary Literature* 46, no. 1 (2005): 18–45.

4. Vera Pavlova, *Detskie al'bomy: Nedetskie stikhi* (Moscow: AST, 2011), 5.

5. Parshchikov, "Snimaiu ne ia, snimaet kamera," 165.

6. Joseph Brodsky, *Sochineniia Iosifa Brodskogo* (St. Petersburg: Pushkinskii fond, 1997) 3:229.

7. Shawn Michelle Smith and Sharon Sliwinski, eds., *Photography and the Optical Unconscious* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

8. Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2, 1931–1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 510; quoted in Smith and Sliwinski, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*, 5.

9. Smith and Sliwinski, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*, 5.

10. Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 510–12; quoted in Smith and Sliwinski, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*, 5.

11. Walter Benjamin, "Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility," Second Version (1936), in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 3, 1931–1938* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), 117; quoted in Smith and Sliwinski, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*, 8.

12. Dennis Ioffe, "Arkady Dragomoshchenko's Photography: A New Visuality and A Poetics of Metaphysical Inebriation," *Slavic and East European Journal* 55, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 585.

13. Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, *Zdes'*, n.d., http://www.guelman.ru/slava/writers/drag1.htm.

14. These lines contain a play on words based on the dual meaning of the verb "snimat'" which means both "to take [a picture]" and to pull, remove, take off. The line about "pulling a cobweb from my face" ("postoianno snimaiushchim pautinu s litsa") can also read as "photographing the cobweb on my face."

15. Dragomoshchenko, *Zdes'*.

16. Sandler, Ioffe, and Iampol'skii have taken up the complicated issue of the role of photography in Dragomoshchenko's creative world, but these scholars did not closely analyze "Sny, kotorye vidiat fotografov" ("Dreams that photographers appear to" in Bela Shayevich's translation, or, alternatively "Dreams that envision photographers"). This is a text that undoubtedly relates to how photography merges or collides with the unconscious. For these scholars' writings on Dragomoshchenko and photography, see Stephanie Sandler, "Arkadii Dragomoshchenko: Poet and Photographer," *Jacket 2*, August 8, 2014, http://jacket2.org/article/arkadii-dragomoshchenko-poet-and-photographer; Ioffe, "Arkady Dragomoshchenko's Photography"; Mikhail Iampol'skii, *Iz khaosa: Dragomoshchenko: Poeziia, fotografiia, filosofiia* (St. Petersburg: Knizhnye masterskie, 2015).

17. Some readers see in this poem language and imagery connected to hallucinogenic and other mind-altering drugs. This approach to the text can serve as further evidence of the importance of altered consciousness for this photo-poetic text. I am grateful to Victoria Thorstensson for suggesting this subtext for the poem.

18. Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, *Endarkenment: Selected Poems* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 18.

19. Translation by Bela Shayevich in Dragomoshchenko, *Endarkenment*, 19.

20. This poem's interest in the anatomy of vision, the human sight organs (summ[a] zrachka i vlagi), and the way consciousness is activated behind closed eyes in the state of sleep and dreams recall the lines quoted in the epigraph to this section from Pasternak's poem "In the Forest" (V lesu).

21. Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, *Opisanie* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'skii Tsentr "Gumanitarnaia Akademiia," 2000), 146.

22. Iampol'skii, *Iz khaosa*, 102–13.

23. Sandler, "Arkadii Dragomoshchenko."

24. Danila Davydov and Il'ia Kukulin, "Parad-alle titanov mysli," *Izvestiia*, November 25, 2002, https://iz.ru/news/270044.

25. Linor Goralik and Andrei Sen-Sen'kov, "Interv'iu," *Vozdukh*, no. 4, 2007, http://

www.litkarta.ru/projects/vozdukh/issues/2007-4/interview.

26. Andrei Sen-Sen′kov and Vladimir Korkunov, "Stsenarist snovidenii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, August 16, 2018, http://www.ng.ru/person/2018-08-16/10_946_persona.html.

27. Anna Golubkova, "Odinokaia sud′ba velosipedov," *Vozdukh*, no. 1, 2010, http://www.litkarta.ru/projects/vozdukh/issues/2010-1/golubkova.

28. For examples of Sen-Sen′kov's computer-drawn visual poetry (vizual′naia poeziia), see Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, *Dyrochki soprotivleniia* (Moscow: ARGO-RISK, 2006).

29. Similar images to those in figures 5.5 and 5.6 are found together with creative writing in Andrei Sen-Sen′kov and Aleksei Tsvetkov Jr., *Slesh* (Moscow: ARGO-RISK, 2008). Excerpts from this work with the photographs are also available in *Vozdukh*, no. 2, 2006, http://www.litkarta.ru/projects/vozdukh/issues/2006-2/senkov-tsvetkov/view_print/.

30. Goralik and Sen-Sen′kov, "Interv′iu."

31. Zakhar Prilepin and Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, "Poeziia segodnia prosto snogsshibatel′no raznoobrazna, interesna i nepredskazuema," November 13, 2007, https://apn-nn.com/analytic/poeziya-segodnya-prosto-snogsshibatelno-raznoobrazna-interesna-i-nepredskazuema/.

32. Sontag, *On Photography*, 14.

33. Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, interview with Molly Blasing, July 20, 2012. For the full text of the complete cycle, along with Glassie's photographs and translation by Molly Blasing, see Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, John Glassie, and Molly Thomasy Blasing, "*Slomannye fotografii Dzhona Glessi* (*John Glassie's Broken Photographs*)," *ULBANDUS 15* (2013): 185–97.

34. Sen-Sen′kov, interview with Molly Blasing.

35. Sen-Sen′kov, Glassie, and Blasing, "*Slomannye fotografii,*" 185.

36. Sen-Sen′kov, Glassie and Blasing, "*Slomannye fotografii,*" 188.

37. Sen-Sen′kov, Glassie and Blasing, "*Slomannye fotografii,*" 190.

38. Sen-Sen′kov, Glassie and Blasing, "*Slomannye fotografii,*" 192.

39. Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, "Fotobumaga. Strana izgotovleniia—EU," *Dvoetochie*, no. 25–26 (Winter 2017), https://dvoetochie.wordpress.com/2017/01/13/sensenkov-2/.

40. See also Iampol′skii's reading of another photographic text by Sen-Sen′kov, "Tsarapina okolo Romeo. ZOOM 1:12" in "Dzen-barokko," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 62 (2008), http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2003/62/iamp.html.

41. Tsvetkov and Sen-Sen′kov, *Slesh*. The prose fragment's title is a reference to a US rock band who some suspect took their name from the nine-inch-long nails used in the Crucifixion. Greg Rule, *Electro Shock!: Groundbreakers of Synth Music* (San Francisco: Miller Freeman Books, 1999), 41.

42. Aleksandr Chantsev, review of *Slesh* (*Slash*), by Aleksei Tsvetkov and Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 94 (2008), http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2008/94/ch20.html.

Coda

1. The three exceptions he finds include two poems by contemporary Polish poets Tadeusz Dąbrowski ("I scanned my photograph from the first year" [2009] and "Resolution" [2008]) and Klara Nowakowska's 2010 poem "Low Resolution." For his analysis of these texts, see "The *Photoshopped* Image: the Ekphrases of Digital Photographs," in Andrew D. Miller, *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis*, 290–311.

2. Miller, *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis*, 291.

3. For a curated selection of contemporary Russian-language writing on photography and poetry, see two issues of *Dvoetochie*, edited by Gali-Dana Singer and Nekoda Singer (nos. 25–26 [Winter 2017], https://dvoetochie.wordpress.com/issues/dvoetochie-

%e2%84%9625-26/ and no. 33 [Winter 2019], https://dvoetochie.wordpress.com/issues/dvoetochie33).

4. Kirill Medvedev, "menia vsegda udivliaet," in *Vse plokho* (Moscow: Ob″edinennoe gumanitarnoe izdatel′stvo, 2002), 47–50.

5. For analysis of Rubinshtein's "Eto ia" ("That's Me"), see Mark Lipovetsky, "Self-Portrait on a Timeless Background: Transformations of the Autobiographical Mode in Russian Postmodernism," *Auto/Biography Studies* 11, no. 2 (1996): 140–62, and Gerald Janecek, "The Poetry of Absence: Parataxis in Bob Perelman and Lev Rubinshtein," in *Wortkunst. Erzählkunst. Bildkunst. Festschrift für Aage A. Hansen-Löve* (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2008), 281–95.

6. Medvedev, *Vse plokho*, 47.

7. Medvedev, *Vse plokho*, 47.

8. The photographer Nadar wrote about Honoré de Balzac's fear of the camera stealing the accumulated layers of a person: "According to Balzac's theory, all physical bodies are made up entirely of layers of ghostlike images, an infinitive number of leaflike skins laid one on top of the other. . . . he concluded that every time someone had his photograph taken, one of the spectral layers was removed from the body and transferred to the photography. Repeated exposures entailed the unavoidable loss of subsequent ghostly layers, that is, the very essence of life." Nadar, "My Life as a Photographer," quoted in Rosalind Krauss, "Tracing Nadar," *October* 5 (1978): 31–32.

9. Medvedev, *Vse plokho*, 48–49.

10. Andrei Sen-Sen′kov, "Dva stikhotvoreniia," *Dvoetochie*, no. 33 (Winter 2019), https://dvoetochie.wordpress.com/issues/dvoetochie33.

11. Sergei Vasiliev, "Segodnia, 17 maia," *Dvoetochie*, no. 33 (Winter 2019), https://dvoetochie.wordpress.com/issues/dvoetochie33.

Index

Page numbers in *italics* refer to figures.

abandonment, 114–16, *115*, 124, 233–39, *235*–*38*
absence. *See* presence and absence
afterlives, 152–53, 164, 199
Agamben, Giorgio, 9, 89, 128, 178, 186, 271n19
Aitmatov, Chingiz, 268n161
Akhmadulina, Bella (BA): and imagined reconstruction, 201–13; introduced, 5–6, 178, *180*, *185*; on photographs, 183, 185–91, 200, 242; photo-poetics of, 180–81, 191, 194, 199–201, 212–15; on poetic craft, 192–94; and preservation, 194–201; *shestidesiatniki* context of, 181–85
  Works: "Biograficheskaia spravka," 287n55, 288n58; "Fotografii raznogo vremeni" (Photographs from a Different Time), 186–87, 190, 205; "Ia zaviduiu ei molodoi," 194, 200; "Litso i golos," 187–88, 205; "Mig bytiia," 189; "Noch′ pered vystupleniem," 192–93; "Posveshchenie damam i gospodam" (Dedication to the Ladies and Gentlemen), 189, 190–91, 205; "Stroka," 194, 200; "Uroki muzyki," 287n55, 288n58; "Vsekh obozhanii bedstvie ogromno," 192, 194. *See also* "Klianus′" (I Swear); "Snimok" (A Snapshot)
Akhmatova, Anna (AA), 192, *195*, 286n43; as "poetic mother" of Akhmadulina, 181, 186, 192–94, 212–13, 214; *Requiem*, 199. *See also* "Snimok" (A Snapshot) (Akhmadulina)
Aksenov, Vasily, *185*, 187; *Skazhi izium* (Say Cheese), 184–85
album: of photos, 77, 78, 146, 154, 184, 187, 242; of poems, 228–29, 233–39. *See also* photographic flip-books
Aleshka, Tatiana, 193–94, 205
analogic approaches, 22, 65, 105, 118, 132, 145, 154, 161, 170, 179
apostrophe, 9, 13, 164, 198, 269n4. *See also* ekphrasis
Aristotle, 1
artifact: archival, 207, 221, 242–47, 249; encounter with, 72, 76–78; eternal youth of, 152–53; of Gronskii's room, 88–89; keepsakes, 159–60, 196–98; as lifeless, 113–20, *115*, *117*, *119*–*20*; loss of, 96–97, 108, 163, 196, 200; materiality of, 177, 212; old photographs, 186, 189–91, 242; relics, 89–90, 167, 213, 277n93. *See also* memento mori
Auden, W. H., 149, 161–64, *162*
aura of photography, 89–90, 95–96, 201
authenticity, 25, 55, 190, 201, 214
auto-translation, 133, 152, 167, 281n57
avant-garde aesthetic: and action of viewing, 70–72; and double exposure, 127; and dynamism, 3, 31, 33–35, 39, 52, 181

Bachelard, Gaston, 121

Baraklianou, Stella, 84
Baratynsky, Evgeny, 156, 280n33
Barnes, Christopher, 67, 265n113
Barskova, Polina, "Ob″em prevrashchaetsia" (Dimensionality becomes), 13–15
Barthes, Roland: on future death, 89, 100, 140, 147, 149, 223; on perishability, 200, 201; punctum, 8, 163, 178, 212; "that-has-been," 14, 15, 186, 228; and Winter Garden photo, 208–12, 285n21
Barzakh, Anatoly, 224, 226
Basmanova, Marina, 132, 153
Baudelaire, Charles, 2–3
Bazin, André, 89, 121
being as becoming, 80–85
Belyi, Andrei, 109–12, *110–12*, 282n77; "Druz′iam" (To My Friends), 276n80
Benjamin, Walter, 54, 186, 212; and aura, 89–90, 95, 114; and optical unconscious, 8, 170, 216, 219–20
Bergson, Henri, 66, 81, 83–85
Bethea, David, 73–74
bicycles, 233–39, *235–38*
Bitov, Andrei, 183–84, *185*
Blok, Aleksandr, 98, 269n4
borders, 164–67, 272n37
Bošković, Aleksandar, 4
Boym, Svetlana, 135, 137
Braudo, Isaiah Aleksandrovich, 147
Brik, Osip, 34–35
Brodsky, Aleksandr Ivanovich (JB's father), 133–35, 139–41, *144*
Brodsky, Joseph (JB): on art as carnivorous, 192; composition process of, 170–76, *172–74*; documentary interviews of, 138–39, 149–50; early development of, 5, 133–35, 280n33; and metaphysical mode of poetry, 10–11, 160–67, 178; and past and future life of image, 6, 199; photographed, *136–37*, *143*, *148*, *151*, 157; photo-poetics of, 131–33, 139, 141–43, 145–47, 158–60, 170–71, 177–78; and text/photo pairing, 154–60; on time's effects, 78, 145–47, 150, 152–54, 158–60, 166–67; on tourist photography, 135–39, 147; on water, 140–43, 150, 154, 157
Works: "Altra Ego," 177–78; *Centaurs*, 152; "Dorogaia ia vyshel" (Darling I went out), 132, 152–54; *Dvadtsat′ sonetov k Marii Stiuart*, 283n88; "Footnote to a Poem," 272n37; "Fotograf sredi koroblei," 135; "A Guide to a Renamed City," 142–43, 145–46, 281n55; "In a Room and a Half," 133, 139–40, 140–41; *Litovskii noktiurn* (Lithuanian Nocturne), 164–67, 281n52; "My zhili v gorode" (We Lived in a City), 158–60, 281n57; Nativity poems, 142; Nobel lecture, 154–55; "Novaia zhizn′" (New Life), 152, 281n57; "Ob odnom stikhotvorenii" (About One Poem), 123; *On Grief and Reason*, 149; "Pamiati Professora Braudo," 147; "A Photograph," 133, 178; "Poliarnyi issledovatel′" (Polar Explorer), 132, 155–56; "A Postcard," 158, 281n57; "Rozhdestvenskii romans" (Christmas Romance), 137–38; "To Please a Shadow," 161–64; *Watermark*, 138–39, 164; "Why Russian Poets?," 192; *Zofia*, 133–34. See also *Rimskie elegii* (Roman Elegies)
Bykov, Dmitrii, 82, 261n50, 267n148

Cadava, Eduardo, 54, 146, 270n18
camera: analog, 247–48; cell phone, 241, 247–48, 249–50; digital, 241–42; handheld, 3, 34; as instrument of death, 70–72; and mediated visual perception, 218–19, 232–33; as physical object, 273n51; repair of, 133–34

camera obscura, 2, 74, 76, 259n27
Carter, Sarah Anne, 121
cemetery, 127–28, *129*
censorship, 182, 184, 199, 202–3, 206
Chantsev, Aleksandr, 240
Cheeke, Stephen, 2, 15, 114
Chernova-Sosinskaia, Ariadna, 94 quoted
Cheung, Chan-Fai, 67
chronotope of the photograph, 17–19
Chukovskii, Kornei, 38, 50
Churilin, Tikhon: *Vesna posle smerti*, xxi; "V fototsinkografii," xxi–xxiii
Ciepiela, Catherine, 59, 60–61, 263n89, 264n93, 273n45, 273n47
cinema: imagery of, 4, 8–9, 21, 39, 69, 142, 167; newsreels, 36, 41; work in, 261n50
clairvoyance, 91, 94, 103
clock face, 24, 84–85
Coates, Paul, 256n26
cognition, 4–5, 54, 65, 91, 218–19
collodion, 49, 50, 56–59, 61
consciousness: altered, 11, 16–17, 166–67, 218–20, 224–25; illuminated, 54–55, 65–66, 79; phenomenology on, 66–68; and word, 192–93. *See also* optical unconscious
consumerism, 242–45
correspondence. *See zaochnost'* (beyond-seeing)
Cortes-Rocca, Paola, 146
crossing over, 109–10

Dąbrowski, Tadeusz, 291n1
Daguerre, Louis, 259n27, 271n19
daguerreotype: in nineteenth century, 2, 70, 253n5; properties of, 38, 105, 259n27, 270n16; of soul, 10–11, 95, 104–6
darkroom, 133, 140, 228
Davydov, Danila, 229
death: anticipation of, 5, 95, 100, 214, 218, 223; of Belyi, 109–12, *110–12*; foreshadowed, 146–47, 155–56, 186, 190–91, 206; and funeral rites, 127–28, *129*, 150, 152, 247–48, 276n87; of Gronskii, 88–89; photograph as marker of, 13–15, 89, 139–40, 186–87, 206; and photo-poems, 11–17; of speaker, 11–13, 127–28, *129*; and stillness of static forms, 70–72; transcended, 15–17, 27, 94–96, 103–4, 109–10, *112*, 121, 124; of Tsvetaeva, 202–3, 205–7, 212, 214–15, 278n111. *See also* elegy
death mask, 89, 120–21
Derzhavin, Gavriil, 127, 277n90
destruction, 90–91, 188, 190–91, 200, 214–15, 234
deterioration, xxiii, 15, 36, 38, 168, 234
Dickinson, Emily, 105
digital age: and camera as cast aside, 247–50; photo-poetics of, 241, 247, 250; and self-documentation, 242–47, 249–50
Dinega, Alyssa, 90–91, 100, 276n87
displacement, 64–65, 224–25, 226, 228
distortion, 29, 39, 183–84, 217, 220, 228–29
Doctor Zhivago (Pasternak): life force in, 65–66, 77; painting and writing in, 258n10; photographic motifs in, 32, 73–74, 267n139; poems of, 25, 78, 267n135; vision and optics in, 78–80, 266n127

documentary evidence/footage, 41, 69, 212–13, 242–47, 249–50
Dostoevsky, Fyodor, 2
double exposure: trope of, 20–21, 74, 105, 135, 137, 283n2; in Tsvetaeva's photos, 124–27, *124–26*
doubles, xxii, 83, 135, 145
Dozorets, Zh. A., 83
drafts of poems: Brodsky's *Roman Elegies*, 167, 170–76, *172–74*; as discarded, 132, 177–78; of Pasternak, 260n37, 262n69, 264n93
Dragomoshchenko, Arkadii (AD), 6–7, 185, 216–17, *222*; and L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E poets, 217, 218; photography of, *223*, *227*; photo-poetics of, 221, 223–24, 226–28, 240
Works: *Description*, 289n3; *Ksenii*, 221, 225; "Sny, kotorye vidiat fotografov," 224–26, 228; *Tavtalogiia*, 226, *227*; *Xenia* 289n3
Dragomoshchenko, Ostap (AD's son), *222*
dreams: and activation of consciousness, 11, 16, 52, 219–20, 224–26; of a photograph, 256n38; optical agency of, 224–26; as place of meeting, 23, 91, 273n45; refracted in camera, 169–70, 175–77, 221; strangeness of, 159, 166–67, 229–30
dry plate technology, 3
durée, 66, 81–85
Durnovo-Efron, Elizaveta (MTs's mother-in-law), *129*, 278nn107–8
Dvoetochie, 242, 247–50
Dyer, Geoff, 259n29
dynamic motion. *See* motion and stasis

Efron, Ariadna (MTs's daughter), 86, 96, 97, 108, 207, 278n105, 286n43
Efron, Georgii (MTs's son), 86, 108, 113, 207, *209–10*
Efron, Iakov Konstantinovich (MTs's father-in-law), 128, *129*, 278nn107–8
Efron, Sergei (MTs's husband), 86, 93, 94, *96*, 113, 127, 207, *208*
Ehrenburg, Ilya, 284n5
Eisenstein, Sergei, *Battleship Potemkin*, 69, 235
ekphrasis: conceptualized, xxiii, 179, 252n2; and dynamic/static balance, 85, 214; notional, 180, 201, 205; in Thaw and later, 142, 181–82, 199; typology of, 17–22, 233
elegy: for future self, 11–13, 123–24, 127–28, *129*, 149; photographic, 11–17, 87–88, 114, 146, 180, 186–87, 256n26; and transcendence of death, 15–17, 269n163; twenty-first century, 247–48. *See also* death; "Klianus'" (I Swear) (Akhmadulina); *Nadgrobie* (Tombstone) (Tsvetaeva)
Ellis (L. L. Kobylinskii), 272n41
embrace, 12, 24, 85, 175–77, 219
émigré community, 20–21, 187, 206–7; newspapers of, 109–12, *110–12*; and trope of double exposure, 105, 135, 137. *See also* Brodsky, Joseph; exile; Tsvetaeva, Marina
ephemerality, 53, 58–59, 64–65, 72, 79, 178
epic poetry, 68–72
epistolary exchange, 97–104, 289n3
Eppel', Asar, xix
etymology: of *kazat'sia* (to appear), 265n108; of photography, 109, 258n10; of Spektorskii, 73; of *zaochnost'* (beyond-seeing), 271n31
exegi monumentum, 127, 133, 219
exigency, 9, 14–15, 89–90, 114, 139, 178, 199
exile: of Brodsky, 131, 135, *136–37*, 146–54, *148*, *151*, 157–58; in Tsvetaeva's life, 86, 91, 105–6, 203–4, 206–7, 270n6. *See also* émigré community
eye: abyss of, 92–94, 218; all-seeing, 103–4, 188; anatomy of, 217–18, 290n20; and "I," 9, 66–67,

190; as lens, 138–39, 141; and otherworldly light, 109–10, *112*; and visual impairments, 239
eyeglasses, 133–34, *223*, 234–35

Fedulova, Roza Nikolaevna, 207
Feinstein, Elaine, 206, 286n40
Fet, Afanasii, "To a Portrait of S.A. Tolstoy," 2
Feuerstein, Melissa, 9, 256n25 flashbulb, xix–xx, 49, 51–52, 54, 71, 82, 247 fleeting moments, 8–9, 22, 50, 52–53, 55, 64, 79–80
Fleishman, Lazar, 66, 73, 260n44
Fokht, Tamara, 277n90
Forrester, Sibelan, 181
fossil, 191, 196–99, 200–201
Foucault, Michel, 11
fragmentation, 5; of memory-space, 153–54; and nonmeetings, 98, 100, 114, *124–26*; in photography, 8, 34, 41, 177; in poetry, 59, 69, 72, 160, 228–29; of text and image, 155–56
frame: and *durée*, 84–85; as fixed or rigid, 41; and inbetweenness, 224; of photo, 7, 8, 48–49, *48*; temporal, 135; of window, 59–61
Frank, Adam, 105
freedom, 140–41, 142–43, 157–58, 178, 183, 233–34
freeze-frame, 8–9, 70–71
Frelandt, Karl Ivanovich, 42, 57
future: movement toward, 152–53, 159–60; of photograph, 146–47, 169–70, 196–99; waking into, 176, 219. *See also* death
Futurism, 10, 31, 39, 59, 85, 235

Gambrell, Jamey, 271n20
Gandlevsky, Sergei, xix–xxi; "Pervyi sneg, kak v zamedlennoi s″emke," xx; *Portret khudozhnika v otrochestrve*, xx; *Trepanation of the Skull*, 251n1
Gasparov, Boris, 58, 260n37
gaze: and access to self, 221, 223–25; as destructive force, 90–91; of objects, 238–39, 256n30; of photo subject, 95, 163, 181, 187–88
geography: of borders, 164–67; and Prague Knight, 106–9, *107*; of separation, 93–94, 109–10, 121–27, *124–26*, 164, 269n4
Gessen, Elena, 184
Gioia, Dana, 170
Glassie, John, *Bicycles Locked to Poles*, 233–39, *235–38*
Glazov-Corrigan, Elena, 261n50, 264n102
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von: *Doctor Faust*, 65–66, 80; *Roman Elegies*, 168
Golubkova, Anna, 229
Goncharova, Natalia, xxi, 251n12
Goralik, Linor, 229, 232
Gorky, Maksim, 43–44, 69, 283n2
Gronskaia, Natalia (NG's mother), 89, 108, 116, *117*, 120, *122*
Gronskii, Nikolai Pavlovich (NG): apartment of, 97, *115*, *117*, *119–20*; elegized by Tsvetaeva, 113–14, 116, 118, 123–27, *124–26*, 127; pictured after death, 120–21, *122*; Tsvetaeva on, 88–89, 108
Gronskii, P. P. (NG's father), 124, 277n96
Grudtsova, Olga, 15–17
Gumilev, Lev (AA's son), 198

Gumilev, Nikolai (AA's husband), xxi, 71, 198, 287n46

Hasty, Olga, 50, 53, 90, 262n61, 262nn67–69
Heffernan, James, 1
Hejinian, Lyn, 218
Heron, Liz, 8
Hill, David Octavius, 89–90
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 105
Horace, 127, 168
Husserl, Edmund, 56, 66–68
Hutchings, Stephen, 4, 252n3, 253n4
Iampol'skii, Mikhail, 226, 252n3, 290n16
icon painting, xx, 116–18, *117*, 121, 213, 272n34
image-object, 56, 68, 104–9, *107*, 154, 189
imagined photographs, 180, 181, 201, 205, 208–12
indexicality: of autograph, 200; of lyric, 9; of photo, 3, 7, 89, 91, 109, 145, 214, 219, 226
inter-art aesthetics, 161–64, 196–98, 200–201
Ioffe, Dennis, 221, 290n16

Jakobson, Roman, 3
Janecek, Gerald, 254n16, 291n5
Jangfeldt, Bengt, 131

Kafka, Franz, 212
kaleidoscope, 70
Katilius, Ramunas and Elia, 153
Kawakami, Akane, 22 quoted
Ketchian, Sonia, 205
Khodasevich, Vladislav: "Dom" (Home), 275n67; *Sorrentinskie fotografi i* (Sorrento Photographs), 20–21, 212, 255n17, 274n66, 279n4, 283n2
Kinzy, Tomasz, *Bol'shoi Terror* (The Great Terror), 287n49
Kirshbaum, Genrikh, 251n6
"Klianus'" (I Swear) (Akhmadulina): and imagined photograph, 194, 201, 205–12, *208–11*; text of, 202–4; and Tsvetaeva's legacy, 181, 212–15
Klimov, Elim, *Idi i smotri* (Come and See), 266n121
Klutsis, Gustav, 3
Kodak, 45, 135–38, 158, 159, 160, 262n69
Kolbasina-Chernova, Olga, 92
Kozlov, Denis, 182, 284n7
Krieger, Murray, 35–36, 85
Kruchenykh, Alexei, 208, *210–11*
Kuz'min, Mikhail, 93–94
Kuznetsov, Sergei, 152, 153

Labinger, Lynette, 157
language, power of, 217, 242, 245–46
L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E poets, 217, 218
Lavine, Ludmila Shleyfer, 70
layering, 104–6, 128, *129*, 145–46, 186, 188, 234–35. *See also* double exposure
Leica, 133, 169, 170, 175, 219
Lenin, Vladimir, 18–19, 265n116

Leningrad, 142–46, *143*–*44*, 147, 157, 158–60, 216
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, 1, 35–36
light: anthropomorphized, 139; as catalyst, 75, 226, 228; as empty, 248; otherworldly, 54–55, 109–10, *112*; and shadow, 14–15, 133–34, 168, 194
light-sensitizing solution, 49, 50, 56–59, 61, 226, 228
"light-writing," 44, 49, 75, 79, 109, 258n10
Lissitsky, El, 3
Livingstone, Angela, 52
Ljunggren, Anna, 57–58, 263n74, 263n79
Losev, Lev, 133, 135
loss, 89, 128, 147, 149, 150, 166, 180, 186–87. *See also* artifact; *Nadgrobie* (Tombstone) (Tsvetaeva); *shestidesiatniki* (the 1960s generation)
Lotman, Yuri, 25
love, 80–81, 152–53, 190, 200, 268n150
Lowell, Robert, 168
Lunacharskii, Anatolii, 34, 182–83
lyric: ontology of, 7–10, 69; and snapshot, xxiii, 8–9; as space of mourning, 106–7; speaker in, 66–67, 205–6, 212; vertical addressee of, 87

Madloch, Joanna, 158, 160
magic lantern, 36, 38–39, 76
Mandelshtam, Nadezhda, 163, 187, 215
Mandelshtam, Osip, 285n26; *O sobesednike* (On the Interlocutor), 156
Marien, Mary Warner, 241
Masleeva, Daria Alekseevna, 201, 205, 287n53, 287n55, 288n58
materiality, 154–55, 169, 177, 200, 212
Matevossian, Greta, 263n73
Mayakovsky, Vladimir, 67; *Pro eto* (About that), 253n4, 255n17; "Razgovor s tovarishchem Leninym" (Conversation with Comrade Lenin), 18–19; *Vo ves' golos* (At the Top of My Voice), 235
McKenna, Rollie, *162*, 163
Medvedev, Kirill, "menia vsegda udivliaet" (it always surprises me), 7, 242–47
meetings: in Brodsky, 164–67; correspondence as, 276n82, 289n3; imagined, 190–91, 275n76; between poetic souls, 97–104, 192–93, 194. *See also* double exposure
Mein, Mariia (MT's grandmother), 94–95, *96*, 119
memento mori: camera lens as, 94; and pathos, 15–17, 89–90, 100, 146, 147, 149, 187–88; as static/flat, 13–15, 140, 248; X-ray image as, 11–13. *See also* artifact; death; elegy
memory: as darkroom, 140; distortions of, 5, 137–38; and *durée*, 81–85; in émigré writing, 20–21, 152–54; intertwined with photograph, xix, 9, 53, 105, 138–42, 145–46, 200; temporal frameworks of, 135, 139, 159–60; as what remains of dead, 123. *See also* preservation
memory-images, 83, 244–45
memory-spaces, 123, 149, 153–54, 178
Messerer, Boris (BA's husband), 185–86, *185*, 187, 189–90
Metarealists, 185, 216–17, 219
Metropol', 184, *185*, 287n55
microscope, 36, 139, 228–29, 253n5
Miller, Andrew, 4, 17–19, 241
Minogue, Sally, 214
Minsky, Marvin, 233–34
mirrors, 48–49, *48*, 56–59, 79, 105, 133–34, 142–43, 145

Mitchell, W. J. T., 1
Mnukhin, Lev, 272n43
Modernism, 3–4, 33–35, 39, 70–72
monsters, 202–4, 205–6, 212, 214–15
Montparnasse Cemetery, 127–28, *129–30*
Moscow Conceptualists, 185
motion and stasis: of curtain, 55–56; technological advances and, 33–35, 36–41, 70; tension of, 5, 32–33, 35–36, 73, 79–81, 84–85, 157–58, 283n88. *See also* Pasternak, Boris
Muybridge, Eadweard, 39, *40*

Nabokov, Vladimir: "Rasstrel," 71, 257n46; "Snimok," 17–18; *Speak, Memory*, 87
Nadar, 292n8
Nadgrobie (Tombstone) (Tsvetaeva): and absence of body, 114–16, *115*, 118, *119–20*, *122*, 123; and absence of soul, 88–89, 113–14, 116–18, *117*, 120, 121, 123; as self-elegy, 123–27, *124–26*
Nafpaktitis, Margarita, 20, 255n17, 257n53
Nancy, Jean-Luc, 89
Nappel'baum, Moisei, 15, *31*, 32–33
nature, 66–67, 80–82, 84–85, 157, 249–50. *See also* fossil
nearsightedness, 94, 234–35
Neigauz, Stanislav, 187, 196
Neigauz-Pasternak, Zinaida Nikolaeva (BP's wife), 29, *30*
Nekrasov, Nikolai: *Nash vek*, 253n5; *Provintsial'nyi pod'iachii v Peterburge*, 2, 253n5
newspapers, 109–12, *110–12*
newsreels, 36, 41
Nichiporov, Ivan, 205
Nivat, Georges, 168
NKVD, 86, 287n49
nonmeetings. *See* meetings
nostalgia, 140, 145–46, 189–91, 194, 242

Ochs, Jacki, *Letters Not about Love*, 289n3
O'Connor, Katherine, 52, 56, 262n69
Okudzhava, Bulat, 187
Olin, Margaret, 212
ontologies: of icon and snapshot, 116–18; of inbetweenness, 223–24; of photo and death mask, 121; of poetry and snapshot, 7–10, 133, 154–55, 161, 176–77
optical language: in Brodsky, 133–34, 168; in late and post-Soviet poets, *223*; in Pasternak, 73, 76–77, 78–79; in Tsvetaeva, 92–94, 103–4, 123
optical unconscious, 8, 170, 216, 218–20, 223–26, 228–29, 240. *See also* consciousness
orthography, 196, 200

pain, 232–36, 239–40
painting: exhibited, *28*, 268n159; icon, 116; phenomenology of, 67; and photography, 34–35, 38–39, *46*, 48–49, *48*, 70; and writing, 27, 35–36
palimpsest. *See* layering; textual mediation
Palmer, Andrew, 214
Paloff, Benjamin, 97
Parshchikov, Aleksei, 11, 185, 219, 220–21, 288n1
Pasternak, Aleksandr (BP's brother), *28*, 36–41, *37*, 42, *43*, 45, *46*, 48–49, *48*, 50, 263n74
Pasternak, Boris (BP): and animated snapshots, 61–64, 140; and correspondence with Tsvetaeva, 29, 32, 73, 90, 92, 97, 100, 103, 259n20, 265n110, 272n37; and dynamism, 33–36,

51–55, 70–72, 149, 216; early years of, 5, 36–41, *37*, 86; and language of theater, 42–45, *44*; and light-sensitization process, 56–61; other poets on, 27, 49, 79, 97–98, 181, 187–88, 196, 274n57; and phenomenology, 54, 56, 66–68, 145; photographed, 29–31, *30–31*, 32–33, *37*, *43*, *46–47*, 100; photo-poetics of, 24–25, 33, 38, 50–51, 53, 55, 64, 68, 79–80, 83–85, 145–46; poetic coming of age of, 3, 28, 42, 45, 48–49, *48*; on power and symbol, 64–66, 75–76, 79–80; and views on photography, 6, 29–33, 76–78, 176; visual perception in, 25–27, 36, 40–41, 52, 55, 65–68

Works: "Avgust," 54–55; "Edinstvennye dni" (Singular Days), 23–24, 25, 78, 80–85; "Groza, momental′naia navek" (A Storm, Instantaneous Forever), 49, 50–54, 55, 72, 79, 80, 82; "Khmel′," 25–26, 38; *Kogda razguliaetsia*, 78, 80, 83; *Lieutenant Schmidt*, 69; "Pis′ma iz Tuly," 261n50; Rilke translation, 262n68; *Safe Conduct*, 67, 75–76; "Sosny," 26–27; *Spektorskii*, 68, 72–78, 85; "Toska, beshenaia, beshenaia" (Anguish, Crazed, Crazed), 10, 59–61, 63–64, 68, 72, 85; "V lesu," 52, 269n164, 290n20; "V stepi okhladeval zakat" (In the steppe the sunset was growing cold), 53; *The Year 1905*, 68–72, 100; "Zamestitel′nitsia" (The Substitute), 49, 50, 61–64; "Zerkalo" (Mirror), 49, 56–59, 61, 80. See also *Doctor Zhivago*; *Sestra moia zhizn′* (My Sister Life)

Pasternak, Leonid Osipovich (BP's father), 5, 27, *28*, *43*, 45, *46*, 48–49, *48*, 97, 263n74

Pavlova, Vera, "Utreniaia molitva" (Morning Prayer), 219

perceptual experience, 65–68, 83–85. *See also* visual perception

peripheral vision, 218

permanence and impermanence, 12, 145, 154, 200–201

phenomenology, 54, 66–68, 145

photo-clubs, 182

photo-collage, 4–5, 160, 253n4

photographic developing process: chemicals in, 58, 262n69; eternity as, 71–72; exposure time, 31, 33–34, 253n5; memory as, 140–41, 176–77; poetic richness of, xix–xx, xxii, 242; water in, 140–43; wet-plate, 50, 56–59, 61. *See also* collodion

photographic flip-books, 36, 39–41, *40*, 50, 72

photographic negatives: developing of, xxi, 59, 61, 74, 184; discarding of, 132, 142, 159–60, 177–78

photographic portraits: of Akhmadulina, *180*, *185*; of Akhmatova, *195*, 196; animated, *40*, 49, 50, 61–64, 140; of Auden, *162*, 163; of Belyi, *110–12*; of Brodsky, *136–37*, *143*, *148*, *151*; of Brodsky's parents, *144*; as distorting, 29, 32–33; of Dragomoshchenko, *222*; group, *31*, *43–44*, *96*, *185*, *208*, *210*; of objects, *107*, *115*, *117*, *119–20*, *122*, *129*, *223*, *227*, *230–31*, *235–38*; of Pasternak, *30–31*, *37*, *43*, *46–47*, 187–88; Pasternak on, 29–33; of Pasternak's loved ones, *28*, *31*, *37*, *43–44*, *46*, *48*, *62–63*; of Rilke, *101–2*; of Sen-Sen′kov, *232*; as substitute, 97–98; of Tsvetaeva, *96*, *99*, *124–26*, *129*, *208–10*

photography: aura of, 89–90, 95–96, 184, 201; and autobiography, 252n1; and biographical memory, 86–87, 212–15, 242–47; danger of, 2–3, 10, 29, 244; etymology of, 44, 49, 75, 109, 258n10; history of, 252n3, 254n8, 259n22, 259n27; and literature, 34, 182–83, 232–33, 252n1, 252n3, 253nn4–5; and painting, 34–35, 38–39, *46*, 48–49, *48*, 70; and paradox of time, 52–53, 83; phenomenology of, 1–2, 8, 38, 67–68, 132, 145; and poetry, 131–33, 161, 178, 254n13, 254n16, 255n17, 285n18; and rebirth in the Thaw, 181–83. *See also* snapshot

photojournalism, 3, 31, 34, 183

photo-poetics: conceptualized, 4–7, 17–22, 154, 179–80; of digital age, 241, 247, 250; and elegies, 11–17; late and post-Soviet, 216–20, 240. *See also individual poets*

photozincography, xxi–xxii

Pierce, C. S., 1

Plato, 1; *Phaedrus*, 245

Poe, Edgar Allan, 38

poetic mothers, 181, 192–94, 212–13, 214, 287n55
poetics of photography. *See* photo-poetics
poiesis, 5
Polivanov, Konstantin, 69
Polukhina, Valentina, 152
portraiture, xx, 283n88. *See also* photographic portraits
Poslednie novosti (Latest News), 109–12, *110*–*12*
Prague Knight, 106–9, *107*
prediction/prophecy, 20–21, 103, 109, 147
presence and absence, 22, 51–53, 79, 87, 89, 114–16, *115*, 127–29, *129*, 186
preservation: of double-exposed image, 124–27, *124*–*26*; of memory, 145, 153–54, 168–70, 177–78; of person, 15–17, 190–91, 196–201, 219, 242. *See also* memory
Presto, Jenifer, 255n17
Proust, Marcel, 65, 143, 145, 276n82
Pulkovo airport, 150, *151*
punctum, 8, 163, 178, 212
Punin, Nikolai (AA's husband), 198
Pushkin, Alexander, 127, 168, 190, 192, 193; *Eugene Onegin*, 72–73, 74; "Ia Vas liubil," 283n88; "K moriu" (To the Sea), 280n20; *Mednyi vsadnik*, 266n128; "Pamiatnik," 283n88. See also *exegi monumentum*

reader/viewer, 9, 182–83, 187–88, 190–91, 255n24
Realism, 2, 38
reality: experience of, 5, 81, 143, 145, 228; manipulation of, 183–84; as open-ended, 167; photograph as trace of, 89–90
record of destruction, 188, 190–91
refraction, 59, 76, 98, 128, 169–70, 175, 176
Reid, Susan, 181–82
Reischl, Katherine M. H., 183, 252n3, 259nn22–23
repetition, 8–9, 36, 221, 238–39
Rexer, Lyle, 7
Rigsbee, David, 168
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 27, 100, *101*–*2*, *115*, 262n68; "Elegy for Marina Tsvetaeva-Efron," 100; epistolary exchange with Tsvetaeva, 92, 97–104, 114; Tsvetaeva's poem for, 87–88, 92, 103–4, 114, 115, 122, 272n37
Rimskie elegii (Roman Elegies) (Brodsky), 133, 167, 269n163; drafting of, 170–76, *172*–*74*; *exegi monumentum* in, 133, 219; ruins and preserved memory in, 168–70, 177
Rodchenko, Alexander, 3, 33–34, 45, 52, 239; *Pro eto* (About that), 253n4, 255n17
Rubinshtein, Lev, "Eto ia" (That's Me), 242
Rudova, Larissa, 68–69, 69, 77, 81
Russian Civil War, 86, 191, 200
Russian Revolution (1905), 68–72, 191
Russo-Japanese War, 36, 41

Saakiants, Anna, 272n41, 272n43
Saltanova, Svetlana, 207
Samarkina, M. D., 257n45
Sandler, Stephanie, 226, 228, 290n16
Satiukov, Pavel A., 183
Savior-Not-Made-by-Hands icon, 116–18, *117*

schizophrenia, xxi–xxii
Schweitzer, Victoria, 90
Sebald, W. G.: *Austerlitz*, 87, 213; *The Emigrants*, 87
Sedakova, Olga, 65–66
self: documentation of, 242–47, 249–50; and "I"/"eye," 9, 66–67, 190; inbetweenness of, 223–24; instability of, 76–78, 212–13; seeing of, xxi–xxii, 56, 128, *129*, *136*, 149, 158, 221, 223–25
Sen-Sen'kov, Andrei, 6–7, 216–17; as photographer, 229, *230*–*31*; photo-poetics of, 228–29, 233, 239–40; and ultrasound diagnostics, 232–33, *232*; on violence, 233–40
  Works: *Durochki soprotivleniia*, 290n28; *Fotobumaga. Strana izgotovleniia—EU*, 239; "Na smert' liubogo cheloveka" (On the Death of Any Man), 247–48; "Nine Inch Nails," 239–40; *Slesh*, 239–40, 290n29; *Slomannye fotografi i Dzhona Glessi* (John Glassie's Broken Photographs), 233–39, *235*–*38*; "Tsarapina okolo Romeo," 291n40
separation. *See* geography
Sergeeva-Kliatis, Anna, 73
Sestra moia zhizn' (My Sister Life) (Pasternak): composition of, 41–42, 45, 48–49; philosophy in, 54, 56, 66, 68; photographic motifs in, 28, 49–54, 56–59, 61–64, 68, 70, 71, 85
shadow: of future suffering, 196–99; and light, 14–15, 133–34, 168, 194
Shayevich, Bela, 224
shestidesiatniki (the 1960s generation), 181, 181–85, 199, 213, 285n26. *See also* Akhmadulina, Bella
Shevelenko, Irina, 273n46, 276n82
Shteiger, Anatolii, 274n64
Shtern, Liudmila, 147
Shultz, Jean Marie, 57–58
Shumov, Petr, 98, *99*, 104
Shvarts, Elena, "Elegiia na rentgenovskii snimok moego cherepa" (Elegy on an X-ray of My Skull), 11–13
silkscreen printing, 224, 226, 228
Silver Age, 178, 181, 205
Singer, Gali-Dana and Nekoda, 242
Sinyavskii, Andrei, 66–67
sleep. *See* dreams
Sliwinski, Sharon, 219–20
Smelov, Boris, 221
Smith, Alexandra, 277n90
Smith, Shawn Michelle, 219–20
snapshot: and interrupted motion, 100, 163, 177, 196–97; limitations of, 27–28, 33, 135; ontology of, 7–10; sequence of, 70–71, 72, 168, 233–39; vs summary portrait, 33–34, 51–52, 84; as theft of an instant of life, 149, 152–53, 157–58, 177; trust in, 176. *See also* photography
"Snimok" (A Snapshot) (Akhmadulina): and photo source, 181, 194–96, *195*, 198–201, 205, 257n45; and pull to intervention, 191, 201, 214–15; text of, 196–98
Sokolowski, Robert, 66
Solzhenitsyn, Alexander, *Gulag Archipelago*, 183
Sontag, Susan: on Brodsky, 282n74; on indexicality, 4, 89, 143, 145, 188; on memento mori, 15, 100, 140, 147, 149, 186, 212; on violence of photo, 213, 233
Sosinskii, Vladimir, 127–28, 273n51
soul: anguish of, 59–61, 63; illuminated, 65–66; photographs of, 10–11, 16, 95, 104–6, 132, 142, 219; poetic, 87, 104, 116, 123. *See also* meetings
Sovetskoe foto (Soviet Photo), 182

Spaso-Preobrazhenskii cathedral, *143*–*44*
speech acts, 214–15. *See also* "Klianus'" (I Swear) (Akhmadulina)
Spender, Stephen, 55, 149
spirit photography, 123, 264n93
spontaneity, 8, 32–33
SSSR na stroike (USSR in Construction), 183
Stalin, Josef, 178, 182, 191, 196, 198, 201, 284n3, 284n5, 286n39
stasis. *See* motion and stasis
Stevens, Wallace, "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven," 9
Stewart, Susan, 7–8
Stigneev, Valerii, 254n8
still movement, 36, 39–41, 45, 50, 55, 58–59, 79–80
stillness, 8–9, 15, 26–27, 70–72
Stolarski, Christopher, 34
St. Petersburg. *See* Leningrad
Strand, Mark, 167
studio aesthetic, 33–34
studium, 212, 255n24
surrealism, 127, 167, 229
surrogates, 18–19, 97–98, 118
svetopis', 49
Sviatopolk-Mirskii, Dmitrii Petrovich, 69
symbol, notion of, 65, 75, 239–40
Szymborska, Wisława, "Fotografia z 11 września," 288n67

Talbot, William Henry Fox, 258n10
Tarkovsky, Arsenii, "Fotografiia" (A Photograph), 15–17
Tavtalogiia, 226, *227*
technology: of digital age, 234, 241, 247; inventions/advancements, 3–5, 36–41, 253n5; and natural world, 28, 35, 41, 54
telescope, 274n57
temporality(ies): as distanced, 186–88, 194, 197–201; multiple frames of, 131–32, 135, 139, 146–47; paradoxical juxtaposition of, 51–53, 82, 84, 154, 155–56, 159–60, 166–67; of photographs, 7, 24, 27, 52–53; of poetry, 35–36. *See also* double exposure; time
Terror (Stalinist), 182, 188, 196, 199, 201, 286n39
Teskova, Anna, 88, 106, 108, 109, 120, 124
textual mediation: autograph, *195*, 196, 207, *211*; caption, 156–58, 177–78, 242; epigraph, 200, 233; photopoetry, 4; postcard, 108, 155–56, 158–59, 190, 273n51; power of, 132, 139, 149, 153; in visual poetry, 229
Thaw, 181–85, 192, 201, 284n3. *See also* Akhmadulina, Bella
third space, 91, 92, 103–4
time: *durée*, 81–85; effect of, 77–78, 145–47, 150, 152–54, 158–60, 166–67, 168; and water, 140–43, 154. *See also* temporality(ies)
Tolstoy, Lev, 2, 65
Toman, Jindrich, 4
tombstones, 127–28, *129*
topography. *See* geography
tourist photography, 135–38, 147
tragedy, 214–15
transcendence, 17, 91–94, 103–4

Transfiguration, 54–55
travelogues, 183–84
Tret′iakov, Sergei, 3
Tsvetaeva, Anastasiia (MT's sister), 94–95, *96*, 121, 272n43, 274n65
Tsvetaeva, Marina (MT): as amateur photographer, 113, *115*, *117*, *119–20*, *122*, *124–26*, *129*, *130*; and correspondence with Pasternak, 29, 32, 73, 90, 92, 97, 100, 103, 259n20, 265n110, 272n37; and geography of separation, 93–94, 109–10, 121–27, *124–26*, 164, 269n4; and Gronskii, 113–14, 116, 118, 120; legacy of, 3, 5–6, 212–15; lyric voice in, 67, 149; on other poets, xxi, 27, 49, 79, 98, 109–10, 251n12, 273n45, 274n53, 286n43; personal life of, 86, 94–95, *96*, 121, 270n6, 278n111, 287n55; photographed, 98, *99*, 206–7, *208–11*, 256n38; photo-poetics of, 87, 94, 103–4, 109, 123–24, 127, 128–30, 139, 146; as "poetic mother" of Akhmadulina, 181, 186, 192–94, 212–13, 214, 287n55; and Prague, 106–9; and Rilke, 97–104, 114; and *zaochnost′* (beyond-seeing), 90–94. *See also* "Klianus′" (I Swear) (Akhmadulina)
Works: "Babushke" (To Grandmother), 94–96; *Charodei*, 272n41; "Dom" (Home), 10–11, 104–6, 120, 258n3, 282n69; "Idesh′ na menia pokhozhii," 278n111; *My Pushkin*, 280n20; *Novogodnee* (A New Year's Greeting), 88, 92, 103–4, 114, 115, 123, 272n37; "Plennyi dukh," 109–10, 276n80; *Poema gory*, 100; *Poema vozdukha*, 123, 271n20; "Poet-al′pinist," 88, 270n9; "Poet o kritike," 91; *Popytka komnaty* (Attempt at a Room), 100, 103; "Posmertnyi podarok," 88; "Prazhskii rytsar′" (Prague Knight), 107–8; "Rasstoianie: versty, mili," 272n37; "S moria," 273n45; *Stikhi k Bloku*, 269n4, 272n37; *Stikhi k Chekhii* (Poems to Bohemia), 108–9; *Stikhi sirote*, 274n64; *Stol* (Table), 277n90; "Svetovoi liven′" (A Downpour of Light), 49; *Tarusskie stranitsy* (Pages from Tarusa), 206; "Tebe—cherez sto let," 278n111; "Tvoia smert′" (Your Death), 87–88; "U menia v Moskve kupola goriat," 269n4, 272n37; *Versty*, 206; "Zaochnost′" (Beyond-seeing), 92–93. See also *Nadgrobie* (Tombstone)
Tupitsyn, Margarita, 259n22
Turoma, Sanna, 149–50
two-dimensionality, 7, 11, 13–15, 58

ultrasound technology, 232–33, *232*
unconscious. *See* consciousness; optical unconscious
urban decay, 168, 228–29, 233–34
ut pictura poesis (as is painting, so is poetry), 1

Vasiliev, Sergei, "Segodnia, 17 maia" (Today, the 17th of May), 248–50
Venclova, Tomas, 164, 166
Vendler, Helen, 8–9, 87, 256n32
Venice, 138–40, 140–41
Vergara, José, 183–84
verisimilitude, xxiii, 29, 69, 70, 240
Viereck, Peter, 157–58
viewer. *See* reader/viewer
Vinograd, Elena, 61–64, *62–63*
violence: aesthetic, 10, 70–72, 217, 228–29; ordinary, 233–34, 238–40; of photograph, 149, 213, 233, 292n8; state, 182, 183, 187, 188, 198; of war, 41, 234, 236
visual perception: in Akhmadulina, 194; and anatomy, 217–18, 290n20; in Brodsky, 166–67; mediated, 218–19, 232–33, 249–50; in Pasternak, 25–27, 36, 40–41, 52, 55, 65–68, 70–72, 78–79; in Tsvetaeva, 90–91. See also *zaochnost′* (beyond-seeing)
Voloshin, Maximilian, *208*
Volpert-Brodskaia, Maria (JB's mother), 133–34, *144*

voyeur, 190–91
Vsia Rossiia (All of Russia), 261n51

Wall-Romana, Christophe, 4
water, 140–43, 145, 150, 154, 157, 158
watermarks, 79
Werneke, Jessica, 182, 284n10
wet-plate developing process, 50, 56–59, 61
Winter Garden, 208–12, 285n21
witness, 186, 189–91, 196, 200–201
Witt, Susanna, 26, 258n10
Wolf, Erika, 252n3
World War II, 27, 109, 139–40, 146, 159, 182
World War I, 189, 190–91
writing desk, 114–16, *115*, 124, *180*
writing process, xix–xx, 27, 35–36. *See also* drafts of poems

X-rays, 11–13, 229, 285n18

Yakutsk airport, 147–49, *148*, 157
Yelabuga, 202–4, 205–7, 208, 212, 214–15
zaochnost' (beyond-seeing), 91–94
Zbarskii, Boris, 45, *46*
Zehnder, Christian, 262n55, 267n132
Zhazhoian, Manuk, 13–15
Zhdanov, Ivan, 185, 220–21, 288n1
Zsolt, Maroti, 58

Open access edition funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Publication of this book was made possible, in part, by a grant from the First Book Subvention Program of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

Copyright © 2021 by Cornell University

The text of this book is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/. To use this book, or parts of this book, in any way not covered by the license, please contact Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State Street, Ithaca, New York 14850. Visit our website at cornellpress.cornell.edu.

First published 2021 by Cornell University Press

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Blasing, Molly Thomasy, author.
Title: Snapshots of the soul : photo-poetic encounters in modern Russian culture / Molly Thomasy Blasing.
Description: Ithaca [New York] : Cornell University Press, 2021. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2020048407 (print) | LCCN 2020048408 (ebook) | ISBN 9781501753695 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781501753701 (ebook) | ISBN 9781501753718 (pdf)
Subjects: LCSH: Russian poetry—20th century—History and criticism. | Literature and photography—Russia—History—20th century. | Literature and photography—Soviet Union—History. | Photography in literature.
Classification: LCC PG3065.P46 B53 2021 (print) | LCC PG3065.P46 (ebook) | DDC 891.71/409357—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020048407
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020048408

Cover image: Aleksandr and Leonid Pasternak self-portrait in a mirror, Volkhonka Street studio, Moscow, c. 191521. Image courtesy of the Pasternak Family Archive.